

SENIOR

THIRD YEAR (1924)

(AGES 14 TO 17)

SUITABLE ALSO FOR BIBLE CLASSES

TRAINING IN FAITH, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE

A THREE YEARS' CYCLE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL
LESSONS GRADED TO COVER THE LIFE OF
THE PUPIL FROM THE AGE OF 5 TO 17

IN FOUR GRADES :

- I. KINDERGARTEN (AGES 5 TO 8)
- II. LOWER MIDDLE (AGES 8 TO 11)
- III. HIGHER MIDDLE (AGES 11 TO 14)
- IV. SENIOR - - (AGES 14 TO 17)
(SUITABLE ALSO FOR BIBLE CLASSES)

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GENERAL EDITORS:

The REV. T. GRIGG-SMITH, M.A.

in consultation with

The RIGHT REVEREND the LORD BISHOP of HULME, D.D.,
and the REV. L. W. GRENSTED, M.A., B.D.

WRITERS OF NOTES (Third Year)

- The REV. H. R. BAKKER, B.A., B.D. (10)
The REV. R. W. BALLEINE, M.A. (12)
The REV. W. H. BASS, M.A., B.D. (5)
The REV. S. C. CARPENTER, M.A. (7)
MISS G. E. CLAPHAM, B.A. (8)
The REV. W. F. J. G. COLES, B.A., B.D. (17)
The REV. CANON F. W. COOPER, M.A. (3)
The VEN. ARCHDEACON J. R. DARBYSHIRE, M.A. (15)
The REV. DENIS FLETCHER, M.A. (3)
MRS. LEONARD FLETCHER (7)
The REV. CANON PETER GREEN, M.A. (5)
The REV. L. W. GRENSTED, M.A., B.D. (5)
MRS. L. W. GRENSTED (10)
The REV. T. GRIGG-SMITH, M.A. (20)
MRS. T. GRIGG-SMITH (12)
MISS V. HEWIT, M.A. (4)
The RIGHT REV. the LORD BISHOP of HULME, D.D. (6)
The REV. S. H. MARTIN, M.A. (5)
The REV. W. A. PARKER MASON, M.A. (6)
The REV. T. NICKLIN, M.A. (5)
The REV. G. R. OAKLEY, M.A., B.D. (10)
The REV. R. PARKES, M.A. (17)

The writer's initials are appended to each set of notes.

The figures in brackets indicate the total sets of notes for which each contributor to the Third Year's Course is responsible.

GENERAL PLAN OF THE SERIES

In these volumes an attempt is made to supply the teacher with information : *matter* from which a lesson may be built up for each Sunday in the year. To this end vivid and inspiring notes have been written so that the teacher may gain a living grip of the subject. The *method* by which this material may best be used is dealt with in a specially prepared companion volume, *How to teach and Organise in the Sunday School* (S.P.C.K. 1s. 6d.), wherein will be found a simple exposition of the principles underlying all effective Sunday School work.

The lessons are arranged in a Three Years' Cycle, each course being divided into Four Grades. Hence, if the manuals continue to be used for twelve years, i.e. if the three years' cycle is used four times as the main guide to the Sunday School instruction, a child commencing the course at the age of five and passing through the school will have followed a systematised and on the whole consecutive scheme of instruction to the age of seventeen.

The work is correlated with the Suggested Syllabus of Religious Instruction for Day Schools (Macmillan, 1s. 6d.) to avoid overlapping of subjects on week-day and Sunday as far as possible.

I. KINDERGARTEN (ages 5 to 8).

The basis of instruction is here found in suitable Old and New Testament stories, talks on the Church and Church membership, God's House, Worship and allied subjects so far as a child of this age can receive them, the Great Festivals and Seasons, Saints and Missionary Heroes and Heroines. With this teaching is associated the learning of Hymns, Prayers, and passages of Scripture.

II. LOWER MIDDLE GRADE (ages 8 to 11).

In this group biographies are dealt with from the Old and New Testaments, Church History and Christian Missions ; but care is taken to avoid too lengthy a treatment of any one subject. It has not been thought advisable, for instance, to allow Old Testament lessons to occupy the whole of a year to the exclusion of other matters. In the lessons from the Bible emphasis is laid on personal rather than historical elements. The Christian Year is treated as the seasons occur, and in the teaching of Church membership, in addition to talks on the various parts of the church and the explanation of one or two services, Christian doctrine

based on the Catechism is included as follows : First year, the spiritual teaching of the Baptismal Covenant ; Second year, the meaning of the Lord's Prayer and the teaching contained in the Duties ; Third year, lessons based on the Creed.

III. HIGHER MIDDLE GRADE (ages 11 to 14).

In this group more is done to bring the children's knowledge into touch with the wider outlook upon life which they are gaining with increasing years. The work looks steadily forward to Confirmation.

New Testament.—In addition to the Gospel Story is added instruction on how the Bible came into existence and has been handed down to us. St. Paul and his letters and St. John and his Revelation are dealt with in an interesting and simple way.

Old Testament.—In each year the life of one of the Prophets is taken or some portion of the Old Testament is dealt with, showing the way in which the revelation of God to Israel was gradually leading up to the coming of the Saviour.

Prayer Book.—Lessons are so arranged that the Catechism is made a living and interesting summary of Christian teaching, and a more extensive knowledge is gained of the meaning of worship, especially as provided for in the Church's services.

Lessons from Church History and the Mission Field are chosen to illustrate the growth of the Church and to encourage a healthy hero and heroine worship.

IV. SENIOR GRADE (ages 14 to 17).

In this group more consecutive study is possible, and consequently the work is arranged on the following broad principles :

Advent to Lent.—An Old or New Testament subject.

Lent to Whitsuntide.—Bible, Prayer Book, Church History or Missionary subject.

Trinity to Advent.—Prayer Book, Church History, Missionary or other subject bearing more directly upon the privileges and responsibilities of active Church membership. Such subjects include something of the History of the English Church ; of the Book of Common Prayer ; knowledge of Hymns and Church Music ; Parochial Church Councils and the Diocesan and world-wide activities of the Church.

The lessons are dealt with so as to meet the special needs of the adolescent, and are suitable for Bible Classes.

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HOW TO USE THE NOTES

It is hoped that the notes of lessons in this series will greatly facilitate the work of the Preparation Class, because the material of the lesson may be studied by the teacher individually from the books. In the class, therefore, greater attention will be paid to the method of giving the lessons and of arranging all the details which may make or mar the Sunday school session. If it is impossible to hold a Preparation Class the responsibility of the superintendent is vastly increased, for he must think out alone, and not in counsel with the staff, every detail of the programme. This course is only a second best. It is an universal experience that the most effective teaching and the most happy work goes on in those schools where, week by week, the whole staff meets to consider beforehand all the details of the session for the next Sunday. For Senior and Bible Classes the Preparation Class will partake of the nature of a Study Circle.

The following notes should be read carefully.

The Superintendent is the general, who, with the help of the staff, plans as a whole the campaign which is to lead the pupils to victory. The notes purposely have not been over-elaborated, so that the superintendent may be free. Hymns have not been recommended for the reason that the appropriate hymn-book is the one used at the parish church. Most schools have already done their best with the hymn-books available, and the staff can select from them appropriate hymns for each session. The responsibility of the superintendent in this matter is very great.

Prayers.—In addition to those that may be already in use, help may be obtained from the collection of *Prayers for Day and Sunday School*, to be obtained through the publishers of the present volumes (post free, 10d.).

Passages of Scripture for the teacher's reading and study are given at the head of each lesson where suitable. Appropriate selection should be made from these for reading in class.

The Teacher will be well advised to commence the study of the following Sunday's lesson on Monday at the latest. It is wonderfully interesting to observe how, from this and that unforeseen source, little additions, illustrations, and ideas gather as the week goes on. These vitally influence the lesson when the class is faced

on Sunday. To defer preparation is to approach more nearly to a betrayal of the trust committed to us. The temptation to omit the lesson of the course and to "take what I like" should be resisted at all costs. For the staff as a whole to agree to transfer or substitute a lesson is an entirely different and often very advisable policy. In any case, however, it is well to keep in view the scheme as a whole. It is urged that the teacher should study the notes first *for himself*, making the matter entirely his own; and afterwards *for the scholars*, sorting, arranging, and utilising all the art which goes to create a good lesson.

The Headings should be seized upon and used as landmarks in studying the notes.

Memory Work is left for the Preparation Class or for the teacher to decide. That should be chosen which will most help the pupil. It should be full of meaning and interest, and appropriate to the lesson. A simple, easily understood text is invaluable as a peg on which the pupil may hang what has been learnt, or as summing up or giving centre to the teaching. To omit memory work is a serious error. It is an idea fraught with great loss that we should not encourage senior scholars to learn passages from the Bible and Prayer Book by heart. The wise teacher will stimulate in the pupil a keen desire to commit a great deal to memory.

The Catechism should not be neglected and dropped in the senior classes but rather more fully interpreted. Many candidates for Confirmation at the age of seventeen or eighteen have forgotten their Catechism, largely because they have heard no mention of it since they learned it a few years before. It is desirable also that in the senior classes the Prayer Book should be freely used in association with the lessons, so that it becomes both known and used.

That the above subjects should be dealt with fully here is impossible. If method is intermingled with matter in notes of lessons the teacher's study is interrupted. Rules and guidance for the effective use of all the notes may be obtained from the companion volume, *How to Teach and Organise in the Sunday School* (S.P.C.K. 1s. 6d.).

THE HOLY DAYS

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Sequence of Lessons.—Those so assigned should be taken on their particular Sundays, and any having special reference to other Holy Days should be taken as appropriately near to them as possible. All others may follow consecutively.

THE HOLY DAYS

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LESSON 1

First Sunday in Advent

The History of the Holy Catholic Church

Broad Outlines : 1. The Early Period

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : Passages from the New Testament referred to in the notes. Two good, low-priced books are Bate, *History of the Church* to 325 (Rivingtons), and Masterman, *The Story of European Christianity* (Oxford Univ. Press), 1s. 6d. each.]

1. The Foundation.—"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I. Cor. 3 11). This is true, and every occasion of which it is in any sense possible to say that "at this point the Church in some sense began," is connected with the life of our Lord. Thus it might be said that the Church, in a sense, began on Lady Day, "when God did not abhor the Virgin's womb," and that Mary was the first Christian. You might say that the Church began when the first disciple heard and answered the call, "Follow Me." Again, the Church began a life of victory when the fact of the Resurrection dawned on Mary Magdalene, on St. Peter, and St. John. Or, once more, it began, finally and completely, on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit of Christ, "proceeding from the Father and the Son," created what we have learned to call the Body of Christ.

But there is also a sense in which Christ is the End. St. Paul, in Eph. 2 20, speaks of our Lord as "the chief corner-stone," that is the last, top stone of the completed building. The whole history of the Church is working towards what Tennyson called "the Christ that is to be." These two ways of thinking about our Lord and His Church are brought together by the first verse of Acts. The Gospel of St. Luke was about what Jesus *began* to do and to teach. The Acts is about what the same Jesus *continued* to do and to teach through His Body, the Church ; and the whole of Church History is the volume of which Acts is chapter one.

2. The First Believers.—"Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble" (I. Cor. 1 26).

The important people of the world held aloof, and it was for the most part among the poor that the Gospel spread. A great many of them were slaves, and they were obliged to hold their

meetings before day-break or after sunset, i.e. either before or after the day's work. A heathen governor, Pliny, about 110 A.D. discovered, by examining some prisoners who were accused of being Christians, that they were accustomed "to meet before dawn and sing a hymn to Christ as God." The poor found in the Church a fellowship which the world did not give them. St. Paul asks Philemon (Philem. 16) to receive back Onesimus (the slave who had stolen money and had then repented) "no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a brother beloved." The Christians were brothers. One of the quite early Bishops of Rome is said to have been a slave. The alms given in Church were spent on the poor, orphans, the aged, or those who had been imprisoned for their religion. The heathen were compelled to say, "See how they love one another."

3. The Persecutions.—There are many allusions to persecution, even in the New Testament. Our Lord had warned His disciples (St. Matthew 5 10, 24 9) that it would come. I. Peter 4 12-19 (see especially 16, "as a Christian") shows that it had begun. Revelation (e.g. 2 10, 13) is full of allusions to it. The beast of ch. 13 is Nero, in whose reign St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred.

The reason why the authorities of the Roman Empire persecuted the Christians was that the Church could not allow our Lord to take a place which many of the heathen were willing to assign to Him, as one of many Gods. The official religion of the Empire demanded that everyone, whatever his religion was, should offer worship to the Emperor. This the Christians could never do. It would have been idolatry. Thousands of them died rather than break their loyalty to their one Master. The magistrates and policemen often pressed them to conform just for once and save their lives. But they never did.

Some of the best Emperors were the greatest persecutors. Marcus Aurelius (161-180) was a great philosopher. But he believed that the official religion must at all costs be maintained, and he thought that the Christians were obstinate and pig-headed.

As time went on, the persecutions became more methodical. The Emperor Decius (250) made a deliberate attempt to stamp out the faith everywhere. It came after a period of several years in which there had been no persecution, and there were some who gave way and obtained certificates from the police that they had offered heathen sacrifice. Fifty years later another Emperor, Diocletian, made a still more determined attack on Christianity.

All the clergy were to be arrested, and all copies of the New Testament and other Christian books were to be burned. Thousands were put to death, often with horrible tortures. But, needless to say, persecution had its invariable effect. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church. The Church grew stronger than ever, and when Constantine became Emperor in 312 he came to the conclusion that Christianity was too strong to be resisted. He made terms with it, and became the friend and patron of the Church. But he was not himself baptised till just before he died.

4. Spreading the Gospel.—The Christians were missionaries from the very first. Philip, in Acts 8 26-40, St. Paul in his long and laborious evangelistic journeys, were among the pioneers. It is said that St. Mark went to Egypt, and St. Thomas as far as India. The early Christians did not leave it to a few to spread the Gospel. They were all missionaries. Those who travelled for trade or business, helped to make their Master known wherever they went. Tertullian says (200 A.D.) "We are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you, cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum! We leave you your temples only."

So the Church grew. What held it together was the power of God, expressed through the fatherly rule of the Bishops, the common worship, the common creed, and the brotherly life. The Bishop was the father of his flock, and in the early days was always the celebrant at Holy Communion. As the Church in any neighbourhood became too large to assemble in one building, the Bishop allowed the elders or presbyters (presbyter= priest) to act on his behalf. Even to-day the Bishop really has the care of souls in the diocese. But he delegates much of the work to the parochial clergy. The Bishops were also the Guardians of the common faith. When some queer people, known as Gnostics, tried to introduce some elements of heathenism into the faith, Irenæus (180) replied simply, "This is not the religion which the succession of Bishops has handed down from generation to generation."

5. The Creed.—In the New Testament the actual Creed-forms had not yet assumed their present developed shape, but you can see the beginnings of the Creed in I. Cor. 12 3 ("Jesus is Lord") or Rom. 10 9, or St. John 20 31. The full belief is expressed, though not exactly in the form of a creed, in II. Cor. 13 14 or Eph. 4 4-6. The last passage is roughly the Apostles' Creed

backwards. In course of time people began to say, "But what precisely do you mean when you say that our Lord is the Son of God? Do you mean that He is God in the same sense as that in which we know that the Father is God, or that He is a Divine Being, far superior to man, but not equal to the Father?" The Church had to dig down into the meaning of the New Testament and of its own spiritual experience to discover the answer to these tremendous questions. The answer, when it came, was clear. Three hundred and eighteen Bishops assembled at Nicæa in 325, and drew up a Creed which said in effect that our Lord is as divine as the Father, and as human as ourselves. This Creed, which in a slightly different form, we use to-day in the Holy Communion Service, was the first really complete statement of what the Church really believes about our Lord, "God of God . . . of one substance with the Father . . . Who . . . came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost."

S. C. C.

LESSON 2

Second Sunday in Advent

The History of the Holy Catholic Church

Broad Outlines : The Middle Period

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : Most of the books are too big to be really available. Masterman (see Lesson I) is a good guide.]

1. The Fathers.—Certain great Christian writers are known to us as the Fathers. The Apostolic Fathers, especially Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch, were those in the generation immediately after the Apostles. But most of the greatest of the Fathers lived in the fourth or fifth century. Athanasius was the great champion of the Faith at the Council of Nicæa in 325. He saw clearly that if the view of the Arians were accepted and our Lord were thought of only as a kind of semi-divine Person, there was in Christianity no real salvation for mankind. You could not then say that God had Himself *brought* Redemption into the world. So he contended, and prevailed. Chrysostom

is known chiefly as a preacher (the name means "golden-mouthed") and an expositor of Holy Scripture. Basil was a great leader of men and a teacher of Christian doctrine and Christian life. Augustine was perhaps the greatest of them all. He was an African, and in his youth committed many sins. But he was wonderfully converted (the Epistle for last Sunday had a great deal to do with his conversion) and became a devoted Christian. The Roman Empire was crumbling (c. 400) before the attacks of the northern Barbarians, and he saw that a spiritual Empire was the only sort of Empire that would last. So he wrote his famous book *The City of God*, and laid down the principles on which the Church of the Middle Ages was developed. And so what happened was that the old Roman Empire came to an end, and the Church took its place. Later, we hear of the Holy Roman Empire. This was a twofold authority, the Emperor, e.g. Charles the Great (c. 800) was the secular head, and the Pope was the spiritual head. Meantime our own country, where there had been a British Christianity from very early days and an English Christianity from about 600 A.D., was always rather independent. Augustine came from Rome in 597 and Celtic missionaries from Ireland and Scotland about the same time, and the national Church was built up.

2. East and West.—There were two different types of Christianity in the East and West. The Westerns (Italy, Spain, and N. Africa) spoke Latin, and their chief contribution was that they built up a solid organisation and preserved the structure of the Faith. Thus, Augustine was of the Western type. The leaders of the Church in the Greek-speaking East were profound philosophers and theologians. Most of the discussions at the General Councils (of which Nicæa, 325, was the first) were carried on by Easterns, e.g. Athanasius of Alexandria. The "Nicæa" Creed is much more profound than the Western "Apostles'" Creed. In the fourth century the Empire was divided and there were two Emperors, with their capitals at Rome and Constantinople. East and West drifted further and further apart, the West always maintaining the solidity of the Church system, and the East always more keen to maintain the fullness and purity of the orthodox belief. In the eleventh century there was a split in the Church, and ever since 1050 the Church of Christ has been divided into East and West. The Eastern Church, which includes Russians, Greeks, Armenians, etc., does not admit the authority of the Pope, and in that and in other ways we of the

Church of England have a great deal in common with them though we are geographically a long way off.

3. Worship and Life.—The influence which the Church had in the Middle Ages on the whole population of Europe was very wonderful. No one ever dreamed of questioning Church authority. The story of Joan of Arc is a good example of this. She believed that God had called her to a great work for her nation. She was a devout member of the Church; but her work brought her into collision with the Church authorities. The authorities, French and English alike, were completely unable to understand that God could possibly make anyone act otherwise than according to the directions of the Church; and Joan was burned as a witch. It was not that her judges were particularly cruel. It was that they could not understand.

So there was a darker side to Church authority. But in many ways it made for the happiness of the people. They loved their Parish Church, and loaded it with rich gifts, often made with their own hands. Everyone in the parish was a member of the Church. There was a bad habit of very infrequent Communion, but the whole parish was present at the Service every Sunday, and many of them on week-days as well. The guilds of butchers, cobblers, carpenters, etc., would come there for their guild-festivals. The priests were not always very well educated men, greatly inferior in this respect to our clergy to-day, but the Churches were always thronged. There was, of course, a great deal of wickedness, but not even the wildest robber or the most dishonest merchant ever denied that men *ought* to live the Christian life. The Church was always the most beautiful building in the parish, and was the natural centre of the whole life of the place. The cathedrals and universities set a high standard of devotion and learning. The friars, especially the followers of St. Francis, carried the gospel of the love of God wherever there was poverty to be relieved or the suffering were to be tended. The monasteries, though they owned too large a share of the land, were kind landlords and they made provision for the education of the children.

4. The Need of Reform.—But the Church of the Middle Ages was in great need of reform. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The Church was so secure that the administration became both careless and corrupt. There was a long period during which the Pope was practically a captive in France, and the Papal policy was compelled to take the form devised by the French king. There was another period when for

years there were two rival Popes, each claiming to be the real successor of St. Peter. The Papal court became a great money-making machine, in which appeals from all Europe were heard and enormous costs exacted. In England the Bishops were great officers of state (e.g. the Lord Chancellor was always a Bishop), and neglected their spiritual work. The people were superstitious, and religion became too much a preparation for death. A death-bed repentance, a gift of money to the Church, and Masses said afterwards for the soul of the departed, came to be considered more important than a Christian life. The monasteries became unduly rich.

John Wycliffe, an Oxford scholar, protested against some of the abuses, and there were not a few reformers among those more highly-placed. Grosstete, the great Bishop of Lincoln in the thirteenth century, did his utmost to resist Papal extortions and to purify the English Church. King Edward I, though he taxed the clergy very heavily, was a sincere reformer. There was a series of Councils on the Continent, at Pisa, Constance and elsewhere, to which English representatives were sent, which tried hard to improve the state of affairs, but vested interests were, as so often, too strong.

There began to be a new spirit abroad. The Greek language, which had almost ceased to be read, was rediscovered, and men began to read the New Testament in the original language, instead of the rather misleading Latin version that had been current. The invention of printing, and the discovery of new lands, like America and South Africa, enlarged everybody's mind. The unreformed Church was not equal to the new crisis, and the crash came.

In Germany it was all over very soon. Those provinces which, under Luther's guidance, threw off the papal yoke, made a complete break with the past. In Switzerland (led by John Calvin) and Holland, things went even further. In Scandinavia a much greater degree of continuity was maintained by the Reformers, and in England more still. The Reformation in England lasted more than 100 years, from Henry VIII to Charles II, and though there were many things in it of which we now feel ashamed, yet the final and happy result is embodied in the Book of Common Prayer, which defines the position of the English Church as a true part of the Holy Catholic Church. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Church of England began at the Reformation. It began centuries before that. Since the Reformation it has

been a reformed Church, non-Papal, with English services and English ways, but always, both before and after the Reformation, part of the whole Church of Christ.

S. C. C.

LESSON 3

Third Sunday in Advent

The History of the Holy Catholic Church

Broad Outlines : 3. The Church of England and the Church of Rome

[*For the teacher's reading and study :* The best short book is still Gore's *Roman Catholic Claims* (Longman's). T. J. Hardy, *Catholic or Roman Catholic ?* (Scott, 2s. 6d.) is a series of letters to an English Churchman who feels unsettled. The best thing of all is to know and use the Book of Common Prayer.]

1. The Early Bishops of Rome.—It is generally believed that St. Peter was for some time the head of the Church in Rome. There is very little evidence, and some authorities say that he was never there at all. He was certainly not Bishop of Rome for 25 years, as the more ignorant Roman Catholics sometimes say, and he was certainly not there when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans ; but it is generally believed that he was there for a time, and (with St. Paul) was martyred there under Nero. It is probable that I. Peter was written from there, and " Babylon " in 5 13 means Rome. For a long time after that the Church of Rome was only one among many important Churches. None of the early Bishops of Rome ever claimed any authority over the other Bishops, and when in later years some of them began to do so, the claim was not admitted by the others. The fact is that the importance of the Roman Church was due to the importance of the city of Rome as the capital of the Empire. The title Pope (Latin, *Papa*=Father) was given to other Bishops as well as to the Bishop of Rome, e.g. to Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. When Bishop Victor in 194 and Bishop Stephen fifty years later attempted to dictate to other Churches, they were severely censured.

2. The Middle Ages.—There is no doubt that in the Middle Ages the Pope had acquired a very great authority in the Western Church. The East, of course, would never acknowledge him,

but all over the west, including England, he was regarded as the head of the Church. In many ways it was a good thing for Western Christendom during the centuries from the fifth to the sixteenth to have one visible head. He kept things together, at all events on the Continent. In England his authority was acknowledged, and the Archbishops regarded it as a duty to accept from him what was called a pall, a symbol of their metropolitan office. But England preserved much more independence than e.g. France or Spain, and the stronger English Kings, like William I. or Edward I., resisted the sort of encroachments to which Henry III. or Henry VI. submitted. The title *Ecclesia Anglicana*, "The English Church," occurs in the Great Charter of 1215.

3. The Reformation.—At the Reformation, which began in England under Henry VIII., and ended with the adoption of our present Prayer Book under Charles II., the English Church threw off the authority of the Pope. Its leaders and members came to the conclusion that it was not essential to be in communion with Rome. But they were the same people as they had been before, the same clergy and the same laity. They worshipped in the old Cathedrals and Churches. They went on using the same Bible, the same Creed, the same Sacraments. The novelty was that they had an English Prayer Book, from which the old superstitions had been purged away, and neither the Pope nor any other foreign Bishop had any authority over them. The Reformation did not go far enough for some. The Puritans disliked anything which savoured of the old historic Church. They destroyed a great many of the beautiful things in the Cathedrals, and when they came into power under Cromwell they forbade the use of the Prayer Book. On the other hand there were some who did not like the new ways at all. Lancashire then, as now, was conservative. The Pilgrimage of Grace was a protest against the suppression of the monasteries, an act which, however necessary, was carried out very harshly and in such a way as to enrich a number of very undeserving people. Those who were unable to accept the Reformation became what we now call Roman Catholics. They were very badly treated by the Government for a long time.

4. The Claims of the Bishop of Rome.—In the Larger Catechism of Pope Pius X. it is laid down that "to be a member of the Church it is necessary to be baptized, to believe and profess the doctrine of Jesus Christ; to participate in the same sacraments; and to acknowledge the Pope and other lawful pastors of the

Church." In the Bible (Acts 2 41, 42) we read that those "who were baptized "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in the prayers." That is, broadly speaking, the Church of England case against Roman claims. If you believe that the Bishop of Rome is the Vicar of Christ, and exercises by divine right an authority so absolute that, in order to be of the Church of Christ at all, you must be in communion with him, then you have no alternative but to become a Roman Catholic. If, however, you believe that to continue in the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles, i.e. all the Apostles, not only one of them, and still less the successor, if he be really the successor, of one of them, is the right path for a Christian to pursue, then there is no doubt that the Church of England will suit you very much better.

The New Testament texts to which Roman Catholic writers refer are St. Matthew 16 18, 19 ("Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church"), St. John 21 15-17 ("Feed My lambs," etc.), and St. Luke 22 32 ("When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.") The second and the third clearly refer to St. Peter himself, and authorise him to do the kind of work which we read of him as doing in the Acts. They do not seem to have any reference to the position of the Bishops of Rome in future centuries. The first passage is the most imposing. But what the majority of the Fathers say about it is that it refers to the faith of the Apostles. It must be remembered that the Lord's question was, "But whom say ye that I am?" And St. Peter was the spokesman for the rest. This verse has been made to bear far more meaning than it can fairly carry. No one denies that St. Peter was the leader of the Twelve, and no one need want to deny that the Bishop of Rome is the senior Bishop of the West. But seniority is one thing and dictation is another.

5. Further Difficulties.—The Papal claims are the great difficulty. But there are others. There are some things that most English people dislike, which nevertheless are legitimate. We do not like the idea of a Latin service, but if, for example, the Church in France prefers a Latin service, that is not our business. But there are some things which seem to us to be a departure from Christianity. We cannot believe that it is right to deprive the laity of the Chalice at Holy Communion, and we cannot approve of additions to the Faith. Any individual is free, of course, to believe whatever seems to him to be true. But the Roman Church, during the nineteenth century added two articles to the

necessary faith of the Church, viz. the belief that the Pope when he speaks on faith or morals officially *ex cathedra*, is infallible, and the belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

And so the difficulties in the way of reunion with the Roman Catholic Church seem very great. It is right to explore all avenues, as at Malines in 1923, and it is certain that the Church of Rome has much to contribute to the great Church of the future; but at the moment the way to reunion is blocked by extravagant claims.

S. C. C.

LESSON 4

Fourth Sunday in Advent

The History of the Holy Catholic Church

Broad Outlines : 4. The Church of England and Nonconformity

[For the teacher's reading and study : *Puritan Manifestos*, edited by Bishop Frere and the Rev. C. E. Douglas (S.P.C.K. 7s. 6d.) gives, for the serious student, an excellent account of the Puritan Revolt, together with reprints of some of the literature and documents of the sixteenth century on the subject.

Undenominationalism, by Bishop Strong (S.P.C.K. 2d.), and *Chats About the Church*, edited by the Rev. H. J. Clayton (S.P.C.K. 8d.) would also prove useful.]

1. The first point to be grasped is the unhappiness of disunion.—

There is an enormous waste of spiritual power caused by the separations that exist between ourselves, Roman Catholics and Nonconformists. In this lesson we are concerned with Nonconformists. But in every way the battle against sin would be waged much more successfully if all Christians were united.

The history of Nonconformity in England is as follows. We saw in the last lesson that the Reformation, while it went too far to please some, did not go far enough to please others. Those others in course of time became Nonconformists. Not all at once, because the dissatisfied Churchmen hoped for a long time that they would be able to win over the whole Church to their way of thinking. That was, of course, much the best way. Anyone who has a special point of view and a special policy, ought, whether in actual fact he be right or wrong, to hope that

his view will prevail, and ought to take all reasonable methods of persuasion to win over the other people. And we, if we think that they are wrong, should not attack them, but do our best to state the truth fairly and calmly. The great Dr. Arnold once wrote, "Nothing can be done or ought to be done by merely maintaining negations. I will neither talk nor write (if I can help it) *against* but *for* the true Church and Christianity." Those who eventually left the English Church and set up in separation, did so because their consciences told them that they must; but, ideally, it would have been better if this could have been avoided.

2. The Congregationalists, or Independents.—The first split occurred in 1568, in the reign of Elizabeth. But Robert Browne in 1570 was the real leader of the movement. It was partly because they distrusted the ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, Convocation, Liturgical Prayers and other traditional customs of the Church, but it was also an objection to some things much less important, the use of the sign of the cross in Baptism, the ring in marriage, etc. So, just at the time when the Pope was denouncing Elizabeth as a heretic and forbidding men to obey the English laws, Browne seized the opportunity of making things more difficult by summoning all who would listen to him to break up the National Church. All this is now ancient history. Browne finally made his peace with the Church, and was presented to a living. But Congregationalism went on, and is now one of the most important sections of Nonconformity, including many very distinguished and liberal-minded persons among its members. Its theory is that each congregation is a unit, not to be controlled by any Bishop or other outside authority. Of all Nonconformists they are perhaps the most strongly opposed to any system of Church Establishment. Like all Nonconformists they have often been treated in the past with great injustice, but they have maintained a spiritual conception of religion.

3. The Baptists.—They first appear in the seventeenth century. Their early name was the Ana-baptists, i.e. those who baptised over again persons who had been baptised in infancy. They are more sacramental than some, and, so far, nearer to the Church. But their principle is that Baptism should not be ministered except to those who have reached adult years. The other thing for which the Baptists have always stood is the essential theory of Puritanism, that the Church should be pure, i.e. unworldly. There can be no doubt that Baptism is often ministered to

infants without due care being taken for subsequent Christian instruction and Confirmation; and that worldliness is one of the very great dangers of the Church. But in contrast to the Baptist theory, the Church has always maintained (*a*) that in a Christian family and community no age is too early for children to be brought to Christ; and (*b*) if there are unworthy members, it is better to teach them than to reject them. This does not mean that the Baptists do not teach. Their Sunday Schools are excellent, and they are honourably distinguished by the excellence of their missionary work. But the conception of the Church as a school, or as a hospital, is one which they seem to find it difficult to grasp.

4. The Wesleyans.—There is no space to deal with the Friends or Quakers, who have made such a noble stand against violence, or the Unitarians, who have always been a reminder of the importance of using the intelligence in religion. The Wesleyans or Methodists date from the eighteenth century. John Wesley and his brother Charles, the great hymn-writer, were churchmen all their lives. But the Church of England in their lifetime was very dull and cold. There was a great fear of what was called “enthusiasm,” by which was meant excitement. If John Wesley could have been made a Bishop, his great work would then have had the effect of reviving the Church. He saw that the Church was not reaching, was not even trying to reach, great masses of the population. He went on evangelistic journeys, riding about all day, and preaching wherever he went. His aim was a revival of religion within the Church of England. He formed societies, the members of which were accustomed to attend the Parish Church, and also hold gatherings of their own at times when there was no Church service. The formation of societies was a frequent thing at that time. The S.P.C.K. and S.P.G. had quite lately come into existence. In the early days the authorities welcomed him. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave him good advice, “Do not spend your time in controversy; but in attacking the strongholds of vice, and in promoting practical holiness.” But as time went on, the Bishops became more and more suspicious, and Wesley did some irregular things. So the great movement presently lapsed into dissent. But they remain the nearest of all Nonconformists to the Church, and when Reunion comes, as it will, it may well be that the Church of England and the Methodists will be the first to unite.

5. The Church and Nonconformity.—In a great many of these

splits the Church has been much to blame. If Churchmen (Bishops, Clergy and Laity) had been more spiritual, more far-sighted and more tolerant, many of the divisions would never have occurred. And after they had occurred, if there had been less social and political injustice (e.g. unfriendliness, especially in country places, and exclusion of Nonconformists from the Universities), we should have been saved much bitterness. Things nowadays are greatly improved. We work together in many ways, and we are willing to learn from one another. Christianity is a big thing, and some stand for one aspect of it, some for another. The ideal will be reached when we can all bring our interpretations and our contributions into the one City of God (see Rev. 21 24, 26).

S. C. C.

LESSON 5

Christmas Day

Family Service in Church

[*Note on the Service.*—By a "Family Service" is intended one wherein the whole Sunday school, young and old, meet together for worship in church. For a service which has instruction as its chief object such a mixing of all ages is, of course, not advisable, for it is impossible to instruct children of six and seven years of age in the terms most useful for the instruction of adolescents. Nevertheless, it is more than desirable, it is right and proper, that at the great Festivals the whole school should join in a service of worship and thanksgiving. The younger children may be worshipping more truly than the older ones present, even though the full meaning of every part of the service is not clear to them. It should be sufficient for us that the children know they are offering their prayers and praises to God in His beautiful House, and that they are all united as one family of the Heavenly Father.]

Suggested Service.—(1) Carol ; (2) A few words of explanation of the object of the service : Thanksgiving for the Incarnation, and, in concert with all the heavenly host and the redeemed, worship of the Saviour ; (3) Four or five prayers, each preceded by a short and simple bidding : Collect for Christmas Day, or a simple, well-chosen Christmas thanksgiving prayer ; for a spirit of generous giving, as God gave His only Son ; for the parish and the schools ; for our homes ; for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world ; the Lord's Prayer ; (4) Versicles,

"O Lord, open Thou our lips . . ."; (5) Carol; (6) Lesson (St. Luke 2 8-20); (7) The Creed; (8) Carol; (9) Address; (10) Carol and Blessing. (Appropriate prayers may be found in *Prayers for Day and Sunday School.*)

Address: Subject: "Love came down at Christmas."

What is the Best Day in the Christian Year?—Boys and girls would almost all of them answer "Christmas Day"; and very naturally. For Christmas is the most homely and the most popular of all the Church's festivals; popular just because it is homely; a day of home gatherings; a day of good wishes; a day of giving and receiving presents; a day when we want everyone to be happy.

Christmas comes into our homes as no other festival does, with its decorations, and its gifts, and its parties, and all its good things. But we don't let Christmas stop there. We take it into our hospitals, where we try to give "a merry Christmas" to all the patients, young and old; we take it into our workhouses; we try to send something of its good cheer to the poorest and most unhappy; we want everyone to have a share of the rejoicings which Christmas brings, and we think of people who are far away, and send them greetings; and if we have quarrelled with anybody Christmas tells us that now is the time to be friends again; it is a shame to keep unkind thoughts in our hearts now. For

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.

You know what the sign was: "This shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." That is what the angel said to the shepherds of Bethlehem, when he had told them the good tidings of great joy, that Christ the Lord, the Saviour, was born in David's town. And you know how they went to Bethlehem; and there in a stable they found Mary, the young Mother, with her new-born Baby lying in the manger. And that little child was the Incarnate Son of God the Everlasting Father. "The Word became flesh." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." That is the central fact of history; the heart of our Christian Faith; and that is the reason why Christmas is such a great and happy day. The Baby whom the shepherds found in the manger was a sign to them that the message of the angel was true.

But to us that little Child is a sign of much more than the truth of the angel's message. Think of Him on Christmas Day ; because you miss the true meaning of the great festival if you only think about the things you can see and touch and taste and hear.

1. The Child in the Manger is the Sign of God's Love ; for He is God's greatest gift to us. "God so loved . . . that He gave." Gifts are signs of love. We give them to each other because we love each other ; it is the love which comes with them that makes the gifts really precious. And every present which we receive or give at Christmas is really meant, even if we do not think much about it, to be a type of God's great Gift to us and all His people. The Son of God, who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the very image of His person," was on the first Christmas Day born, a helpless, human child. "For us men and for our salvation He came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." Every gift, however small, ought to carry with it something of the person who gives it to the one who receives it ; and the great Gift of God to His children, His own Son, carries, as nothing else could carry, the assurance of the Father's love. "The Father Himself loveth you." Nothing that has ever happened makes the Fatherhood of God so gracious and beautiful as the lovely gift which He gave to the world on Christmas Day.

2. And then the Child in the Manger is a Sign of the Brotherhood which ought to Unite all the Members of God's Family.—When we stand in thought in front of the manger in which that helpless Baby is lying, when we see how poor and mean everything is all round Him, when we look at the village maiden, whom God chose out of all the world to be His Mother, we ought to forget all those things which separate people from each other : rank and riches and learning, and the advantages which some enjoy, but which are denied to most. That little Child just speaks of the human nature which we all share : of birth and life, of family and home, which belong to us all. He tells us that we are meant to do what we can for each other ; to be unselfish ; to be generous ; to be considerate ; to be courteous ; to be loving. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

3. And then the Child in the Manger is a Sign to us that True Greatness in God's Sight is to be found in the way in which we try to follow His Example. He came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life." We cannot be proud of

ourselves when we are in the presence of the Babe of Bethlehem and remember that He is our Lord and King. "Though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor that we, through His poverty, might be rich." "He went about doing good." And on Christmas Day He says to us all, "Go and do thou likewise."

Ponder what the carols mean ;
What the chime rung out between,
What the laden evergreen.

"Glory be to God most High !"
Sang His angels in the sky
When the Lord to men drew nigh.

Peace on earth, goodwill and peace ;
Love shall reign, and wrong shall cease ;
He is born, the "Prince of Peace !"

This is love ; to do His will ;
Speaking truth ; forsaking ill ;
Bearing and forbearing still ;

Blessing all for His dear sake,
As His blessing you partake ;
Happier thus His world to make.

Let your lives ring out His praise
Like a chime His finger sways ;
Sweet as carols be your days.

(Copies of the above carol might be distributed so that it might be sung. Tune to 302 in the old Children's Hymn Book or 94 in A. & M. are of this rhythm.)

J. C. H.

LESSON 6

Sunday after Christmas

Principles of Christian Unity

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : The really essential thing is to study the *Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1920* (S.P.C.K. 2s. 6d.). This gives the right outlook.

The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare (Baptist) in *The Churches at the Cross Roads* brings out very clearly the waste of power caused by divisions.]

1. The Old Way.—The old way was to regard Nonconformists as persons who had gone out from the Church of England into schism, and must therefore be brought back. It was in fact a policy of absorption. The Church of England, it was argued, was the true Church. Nothing was said about any defects or faults on the side of the Church, which years ago had made certain Christians, rightly or wrongly, feel bound in conscience to turn their backs upon it. It was hoped that the Church would presently swallow, either one by one, or in communities, all the Nonconformists. This was no good. The Nonconformists had existed for a long time. They had, so to speak, made good. God had clearly blessed their work. You could not expect them to admit that their whole career had been mistakes from beginning to end. The utmost that could be expected was that they should acknowledge that there were some defects in their life and constitution, which union with the historic Church would repair. The old way is still apparently the belief of Roman Catholics. They speak on this subject of reunion in a more friendly way than was at one time usual, but in effect they say, "We are the one true Church, and you must join us if you want to save your souls." When we hear this, we feel, like the Nonconformists, that we cannot go back on our history. In spite of our sins, God has blessed us, and we cannot allow that the whole of our history has been a mistake.

2. Lambeth, 1920.—In the summer of 1920, two hundred and fifty-two bishops of the Anglican Communion (the British Isles, the Dominions, U.S.A., and missionary dioceses) assembled in Conference at Lambeth. They dealt with many subjects, but greatest and most important of all was Christian unity. The Bishops issued an appeal to all Christian people. They pointed out that (1) God wills fellowship, but Christendom is not united. (2) No one is free from blame for this, but the time calls us to a

new outlook. (3) The Bible, the Creed, the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and a universally acknowledged Ministry, are the four points on which visible unity will stand. (4) It seems to us that the Episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry. (5) The way to unity is for bishops and clergy of the Church on the one hand, and Nonconformist ministers on the other hand, to accept, each from the other, whatever form of commission or recognition may be thought necessary or desirable. This might be done when some general terms of union had been agreed upon. It involves for Nonconformists what is called "conditional Ordination" by a Bishop; but it does not ask them to admit that their ministry hitherto has been a mistake, nor does it ask them to "join the Church of England." It asks them to strengthen their position by uniting themselves to the Episcopate, which has been since the earliest days the framework or backbone of the Church, and it asks them to join with us in helping to make the great Church of the future.

3. Further Attempts.—In 1923 some "conversations" took place at Malines, under the chairmanship of Cardinal Mercier, who did such a great work for Belgium in the war, between some Roman Catholics and four representatives of our Church. The object was to discuss some of the points at issue between the Churches, and see what were the most hopeful lines to pursue. After the Lambeth Appeal "to all Christian people" every avenue had, of course, to be explored; but the points at issue are rather numerous and nothing can be done in a hurry. But we must never give up hope.

As far as the Eastern Church is concerned, there is little difficulty. We almost agree, and we only need to know one another better. The Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem have quite lately expressed their belief in and affection for the Church of England in the warmest and most friendly way.

4. The Principles Involved.—The main principle is that each part of Christendom has something to contribute to the Church of the future. The Lambeth Appeal was mainly concerned with the Nonconformists, so we will here confine ourselves to them. It is quite evident that Nonconformity does really stand for something. It has shown a power of spiritual independence and a readiness to face new problems in new ways, together with a devotion and a zeal for righteousness that are clearly inspired by the Holy Spirit. What do they lack? They lack precisely what

reunion with the historic Church would give them. We in the Church of England preserved all through the troubles of the Reformation, and have preserved ever since, the historic Creed of Christendom, the historic sacraments and the historic ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. People sometimes suggest that in the interests of unity with the Nonconformists we should abandon all these things. But we must not abandon them (a) because trustees cannot abandon what they hold, and (b) because if we abandoned those historic things we should be throwing away all prospect of closer co-operation with the Eastern Church and all hope (dim as it may be) of some day coming to terms with a reformed Roman Catholic Church.

A good many of the principles of the Church, e.g. the great importance attached to Holy Communion, the place given to worship, as distinct from the hearing of sermons, the dignified ordering of worship, liturgical prayers, the Christian Year with its seasons like Christmas, Holy Week, Easter, and Ascension, are beginning to appeal very strongly to Nonconformists. Nonconformity in a word, is becoming more sacramental. The situation is hopeful, and in many places actual co-operation between Church and Chapel is a very effective reality.

The fundamental thing that seems to us necessary to preserve is the Episcopate. This does not mean that Bishops must always live in palaces, or wear gaiters, or be peers, or be called "my lord." Those things do not matter. But the Bishops are the successors of the Apostles. They have the cure of souls in a diocese, and they ordain others, and so continue and enlarge the ranks of the ministry. To the ordinary Church of England person the Bishop is the link that joins him to the universal Church, as it is now throughout the world, or as it has been throughout the centuries. If I go to Church on Sunday and receive Holy Communion, my warrant for believing that what is being done is really what the whole Church desires to have done, is the fact that the officiating minister has been commissioned by a Bishop with the laying-on of hands. By this fact I, a worshipper in my English Parish Church this present year, am brought into line with the Church as it is now in New York, Calcutta, Johannesburg or Constantinople, and with the Church of Jerusalem or Rome or Carthage or Alexandria in the early centuries.

We want our Nonconformist friends to have a share in the strength of this historic and Catholic inheritance that we possess, and we want for ourselves to share in the freshness and vigour that

is theirs. We shall win unity, not by a policy of absorption, or by throwing away what we hold in trust from the past for the future, but by combining in such a way that each combining party contributes whatever is true and valuable in its own inheritance.

S. C. C.

LESSON 7

First Sunday after the Epiphany

History of the Prayer Book (1)

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : The best simple addition to the following notes in small compass will be found in *Evensong Explained*, by the Rev. W. K. Lowther Clarke (S.P.C.K. 2d.). For more serious study the *History of the Book of Common Prayer*, by Proctor and Frere (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.) may be consulted. See also notes for Lessons 10 and 11, Higher Middle, Year III. The Preface to be found in the Prayer Book should also be read.]

1. The Beginning of Christian Worship.—During the period described in the first few chapters of the Acts, the disciples were accustomed to attend at Jerusalem the stately worship of the Jewish Temple. But they also had gatherings of their own for worship as Christians. They admitted new believers by means of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and they assembled every Lord's Day, and perhaps more often than that, for the Sacrament of the Breaking of the Bread or Holy Communion. A few years later we find at Corinth (I Cor. 14) that they also had services of prayer, praise and prophesying (i.e. preaching). There were as yet no churches, and all these services were held in the large room of some private house (see, for example, Acts 12 12, 20 7, 8, and remember that the Last Supper took place in a room of some house). They were very insistent on the Sacraments. No one, not even the eminent convert Saul of Tarsus, could be excused from Baptism, and they would have thought a Lord's Day was a strange day indeed if they had not been present at the Breaking of the Bread. But we do not know what words they used in the prayers at this early date. No doubt the "Our Father" was used always, and at Holy Communion our Saviour's words of institution would of course be used. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was martyred about 115, was scrupulous about the Sacrament: "Let that be

held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or him to whom he commits it." But we do not know what the prayers were. It is most likely that the Bishop, when celebrating, used extempore prayers. But it is also likely that each Bishop gradually developed a form of words which he used either always or very often. The passage I. Cor. 11 23-26 is probably the language that St. Paul was himself accustomed to use when leading the worship of the congregation. The *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy) occurs in Clement's Epistle (96 A.D.) in a way that looks as if it was already a usual part of his own Eucharistic prayer, and the *Sursum Corda* ("Lift up your hearts") and its response are found at a very early date. Justin, about 130, wrote a description of the Sunday Service, from which we can see that Holy Communion then was very much what it is now. But he is writing for heathen readers and he does not say what words were used. The earliest actual Prayer Book known to us is one which was used by an Egyptian Bishop in the fourth century.

2. Daily Prayers.—We know even less about the exact words of the beginnings of the services from which our Matins and Evensong are descended. It is sometimes said that the sacramental worship of the earliest Christians corresponded to the temple services of the Jews, and their other services corresponded to the services of the synagogue. There is some truth in this, but we are on surer ground if we say that the Lord's Supper was specially connected with the Lord's Day, and that the prayers were said daily at dawn and sunset. A good deal of the service consisted of Psalms, much more than the comparatively short portion now read each time, but there were also lessons and prayers. The Saturday night service was thought particularly important, and from the custom of preparing for a festival beforehand came what our Prayer Book calls Vigils and Eves, and eventually the seasons of Lent and Advent.

3. Development.—From about the seventh century we have plenty of service-books. Most of the features that occur in them are probably a good deal older, because there are earlier descriptions of services from which it is possible to learn the kind of thing that was done. The Communion Service consisted of (a) the Mass of the Catechumens, i.e. Ante-Communion, after which unbaptised persons and those who were under discipline went out, and (b) the Mass of the Faithful. (N.B.—The word "Mass," though it is disliked by a good many churchpeople nowadays, has in itself no particular doctrinal meaning at all.

It is generally thought to come from the Latin words with which the Deacon closed the Service, "Ite, missa est"—"Go, it is the dismissal").

As time went on, there gradually ceased to be any catechumens, i.e. adult candidates for baptism, as all had been baptised in infancy, and the (a) and (b) parts of the service became practically one. There were different types of liturgy. East and West differed a good deal, and in the West there were the Italian, French, and Spanish types. But they all had the same general structure. In England we used the words of the type introduced by Augustine in 597, but the ceremonies, which were very elaborate, differed in different parts of England. The cathedral of Salisbury, where everything was carefully ordered, had a great influence and many churches modelled themselves on "the Use of Sarum."

The daily prayers also became much more elaborate. There were seven "hours of prayer" every day. All these were observed in monasteries and religious houses. Laymen joined in them from time to time. The services consisted mostly of Psalms, the whole psalter being said through every week, and parts of it every day. The lessons were very short, e.g. the lesson read at Compline, the late evening service, was only Jer. 14 9. There were a great many Saints' Days, the whole system was very complicated, and it was said that it was sometimes harder to find out what should be read than to read it when found. It led to a good deal of irreverence, and sometimes to total neglect. The saints' day services contained a number of very unhistorical legends.

4. The Eve of the Reformation.—By the fifteenth century the number of different books required for any service was inconveniently large, and it was felt by all those who had acquired what was called the "New Learning" that a great deal of simplification and purging away of doctrinal superstition was urgently necessary. And it was strongly felt that English people ought to have English services. As far as the service-books were concerned, the intention of the Reformation was :

(1) To put away superstition, especially in connection with the departed ;

(2) To take advantage of the New Learning and the invention of printing ;

(3) To make the laity take an intelligent part in public worship ;

(4) to shorten and simplify the Services.

This led to the production in 1549 of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI., the earliest complete English Prayer Book. It was mainly the work of Archbishop Cranmer, who had a wonderful gift for translating the old Latin prayers into beautiful and stately English. This book really struck the note of the English Reformation, faithful to all that was good and right in the old system, but reformed and purified.

S. C. C.

LESSON 8

Second Sunday after Epiphany

History of the Prayer Book (2)

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : See books referred to preliminary to the last lesson. *The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI.* are published in one volume by Dent (2s.) ; they well repay study. On more recent Prayer Book Revision the publications of the Church Assembly should be consulted.]

1. The First Prayer Book of Edward VI., 1549.—This was the first complete English Service-book. A Spanish Cardinal and a German Archbishop had published revised versions of the old service, and their versions were used by Cranmer in his work. It had lately been ordered that there should be an English Bible in every Church, and two chapters were read from it every Sunday and Holy Day. The Litany had been published in English, and a small book of English devotions for communicants (containing the Invitation, Exhortation, Confession, Absolution, Comfortable Words and Prayer of Humble Access) was provided to be used in the middle of the Latin Service. But this was the first complete English book. It was, on the whole, very like our present Prayer Book, and was made almost entirely from ancient materials, though the old services were simplified and purified. It differed from our present book in a number of respects, of which the following are the most important.

1. Matins and Evensong began with the Lord's Prayer and ended at the third Collect.

2. The ten Commandments were not read.

3. The three prayers which we now call the Prayer for the Church Militant, the Prayer of Consecration, and the Prayer of Oblation, were still all comprised in one long prayer, known as the Canon.

The more reasonable people were content with it, but some wanted something much more drastic, and some wanted no change at all. For instance the Devonshire Rebels, as they were called, wanted the old Latin services restored, exactly as they had been. It is a tragic thing that the first Act of Uniformity should have had the effect of dividing the Church of England into two parties, which have existed ever since. For the time the more Protestant party prevailed. The foreign divines who were invited to pass judgment on the book, condemned it as too conservative, and before long it was superseded.

2. The Second Prayer Book of Edward VI., 1552.—This went much farther in the Protestant direction. It did not condemn the First Book; in fact, the second Act of Uniformity declared that the First Book contained nothing “but what was agreeable to the Word of God and the primitive Church.” But it made a number of changes. In the three points mentioned above a new version was adopted, which we still have. But the chief difference was that the new book suggested another doctrine of Holy Communion. The First Book had been so constructed as to be consistent with belief in the real presence. The Second Book suggested that the presence of Christ was only in the heart of the believer. In fact, it was only at the last moment that Cranmer was able to prevent the insertion of a rubric forbidding communicants to receive kneeling.

3. The Prayer Books of 1559 and 1603.—The 1552 Book did not last very long. The young King died eight months after its publication, and during the five years of Queen Mary’s reign the old Latin services were used again. When in 1558 Elizabeth succeeded Mary, a Third Book was prepared. It was a revision of the Second, with some of the more Protestant features omitted. What is called the Ornaments Rubric (which see, before Morning Prayer) was added. When King James I. came to the throne, there was another revision. A number of Occasional Prayers and Thanksgivings were inserted, and the last part of the Catechism was added. James I. was followed by Charles I., and after the execution of King Charles in 1649 the Prayer Book was forbidden for eleven years.

4. The Restoration of the Monarchy, 1660.—When Charles II. came back, a fifth revision was begun, and in 1662 our present Prayer Book was issued. The Puritans, as they are now called, tried hard to procure the abolition of a number of things to which they objected, e.g. Lent, Saints’ Days, such words as “priest,”

“curate,” “Sunday,” the use of the surplice, the cross in Baptism, kneeling at Communion, the custom of the minister facing east, private Baptism, Godparents, the rule that only the Bishop should confirm, the form “I absolve thee.” But the Bishops would not agree on any of these points, and none of the changes then made were of great importance.

The Book has been in use in the Church of England ever since. The lives of its four predecessors added together were only one hundred and thirteen years, even including the breaks under Mary and Oliver Cromwell, and this Book has lasted two hundred and sixty-three years. It is a noble monument of English prose, second only to the authorised Version of the Bible. It breathes on every page a lofty and devout spirit. *But* it is two hundred and sixty-three years old.

5. Prayer Book Revision.—For a long time the Prayer Book was used in all parts of the Anglican Communion. But presently the Scottish Prayer Book, made by Archbishop Laud and others in 1636, but not used at all at the time, came into use again in the Scottish Church, and in 1786 the American Church issued a Prayer Book of its own. Both these were rather like the First Prayer Book of Edward VI. After the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland the Irish Prayer Book was issued in 1877. Quite lately the Church of Canada has produced a revised Prayer Book.

In 1904–1906 a Royal Commission enquired into alleged irregularities in the conduct of divine service in the Church, and in 1906 the King issued what were called Letters of Business asking the Convocations to enquire into the desirability of any modification of the existing law relating to the conduct of divine service. Ever since then the Convocations, and lately the Church Assembly, which includes laity, have been occupied in preparing revised forms of service. The outcome, if the revision is finally approved, will not be a new “Prayer Book,” but rather a series of alternative services which may be used, if they are desired.

S. C. C.

LESSON 9

Science the Handmaid of Religion

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : Psalm 19, which sets side by side the two laws, the law of nature, revealing God in creation, and the moral law, revealing Him in conscience. Compare the appeal made by St. Paul to this argument from nature to God in Acts 14 15-17. The teacher should illustrate this lesson from any scientific knowledge he may have. The following notes are only one line of suggestion.]

What Science Is.—We hear a great deal about science to-day. It is taught much more in the schools than used to be the case (ask the class what sciences they learned). What are some typical sciences? Astronomy, about the stars; geology, about rocks and the whole structure of the earth; botany, about plants; physics, about electricity and steam and such things; medicine, about illness and the use of remedies; and ever so many more. Most people nowadays know a little about some sort of science, but very few could say just what science is. And that is why they often get into difficulties, and think that in some way you cannot believe science and religion too.

We can get this clear quite easily. Every science, whatever it is, is concerned with the observation and description of facts. Illustrate this from any of the above sciences—e.g. astronomy begins by simply observing the positions of the sun and moon and stars. After a time it learns to predict where they will be in the sky at any given moment. And this knowledge is immensely useful and important, for the sailor especially. But astronomy doesn't tell us anything about the sailor, or about the purpose of his voyage. Astronomy just tells us about the stars. In the same way geology tells us a great deal about coal, and helps us to find it, but tells us nothing at all about the use we are going to make of it. (Get a lump of coal and make this clear.) Science, then, is just the observing, describing, and recording of facts, so that we may use them. But science does not tell us for what purposes we shall use them.

Science Incomplete in Itself.—The world would be a curious place, and probably not at all a nice one, if we had scientific knowledge and nothing else. It is just as easy to use knowledge in the wrong way as in the right. A man with a knowledge of the effects of drugs may be a doctor or a poisoner. Science is teaching us how to build cities and to keep them supplied with everything they need, such as light, and drainage, and trams; and at the very same time science is discovering new high

explosives capable of wrecking whole cities and destroying every living person in them, so that science is tremendously useful if it is used for right purposes, and tremendously dangerous if used in the wrong way.

We can illustrate this use of science from a tram (or any other piece of machinery well known to the class, e.g. the machinery of a cotton mill). A large number of sciences are used in the building and running of a tram. All the materials of which it is made—wood and steel and glass—are scientifically studied and tested, so that they may be trusted to stand the weight and strain. There is then the knowledge of physics, so that the tram may be well balanced and may not overturn on a curve. The strength of the brakes must be known. And when everything else is done the electrical engineers must arrange for a supply of current (which is just scientifically controlled lightning), enough and not too much to drive the tram along. Every bit of this is science. But it will not make the trams really useful to us. There must be somebody to decide where trams are wanted in a great city, and there must be a driver to stop them and start them when people want to get on or off. A directing brain, with a purpose behind it, is absolutely necessary if science is to be of any service. And the brain of a man, and the purpose behind it, are things which science can neither make nor explain.

What we Need besides Science.—If science is to do good and not harm, to build our cities and not to destroy them, we must have something else as well. Our purposes in life must be right purposes, controlled by goodness and love. And that is the business of religion. And obviously it is much more important to have this right purpose, or goodness, than it is to have science, for science is just like money (which is “frozen” power, stored up for use). We cannot live without money, but, given that, it is more important to be good than to be rich, for money wrongly used only brings misery to everybody. Religion, then, comes first, and science, with all that it gives us, comes second. And it is a very serious matter in these days that religion should be put in the first place, for our knowledge is beginning to be so great that if it is used in wrong ways it might almost make decent, civilised human life impossible by letting loose things worse than poison gas and high explosives, guns, warships, and submarines.

Science is not Opposed to Religion.—If we think about what we have said we shall see that science cannot be opposed to religion. They are concerned with quite different things. People often

think that they are opposed because there are some statements in the Bible that are not scientifically accurate. (It would probably be best not to go into detail here, unless direct questions are asked about such matters as the account of Creation, or the Flood. There is matter in such questions for a whole separate lesson, with discussion.) But the Bible was not given to us for scientific purposes. It has quite another object—the object of showing us what God is like, and how we ought to live as His children. Science tells us all sorts of things about this world which God has made, and even about its past history. The story of Creation is written on the rocks, but it is written in quite a different way from the story of Genesis. The rocks tell us just of things that happened, but the Bible tells us *why* they happened. “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*”

It is because God created them “and saw that they were good” that it is possible for us to-day to make friends with nature, and so use it for right purposes. In spite of all the puzzles and problems, the suffering and the struggle, nature does seem to respond to our purposes and needs. The goodness of God’s creation still remains, even though some evil thing has entered in and caused disorder and misery (Rom. 8 22). And it can still be turned to serve goodness. Even the power of the lightning, which seems just terrible and destructive in nature, becomes, in the applications of electricity, one of the greatest means of human good. The mark of God’s handiwork is on it after all. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork” (Ps. 19 1).

Thus to the external aspect of human life, as part of nature and related to the God of Creation, there corresponds an inner aspect, in which that same God comes to us in the moral law: “The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul” (Ps. 19 7). But here we come to the task of religion. We have passed beyond the realm of science, to a level where science can only serve.

L. W. G.

LESSON 10

Art the Handmaid of Religion

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : Try to get some direct means of illustrating the nature of art. Perhaps the most useful thing would be a really good picture of natural scenery and another of the interior of a church. There is no very suitable passage of Scripture. The account of the building of Solomon's temple (I. Kings 5 and 6) is too detailed, and the directions for the Tabernacle in the Wilderness (Exod. 25-30 and 35-39) are even more complicated. There are a good many passages expressing the beauty of nature. See especially St. Matthew 6 28, 29.

One or two examples of really religious pictures, having a special spiritual message, would provide useful illustrations, e.g. Holman Hunt's "The Light of the World"; also pictures of one or two cathedrals or beautiful churches. An inadequate tune such as that to "Fight the good fight" (A. & M.) might be contrasted with that to "Ye holy angels bright." *Everyman's Guide to Church Music*, Gardner (S.P.C.K. 2d.) is a very helpful pamphlet.]

What Art Is.—We saw in the last lesson that science observes and records truth for our use. Art is even more difficult than science to define exactly, but we may say of it that it observes and records beauty for our enjoyment. A picture is perhaps the simplest form of art for us to understand. It is copied from something beautiful, but it is not just a copy. It tries to pick out for us the specially beautiful points, so that we cannot help seeing their beauty, though we might easily have missed it in nature itself. A picture is a sort of explanation, and it is meant to help us.

All art does this, and there are many kinds of art—music, poetry, architecture, and many others. A few minutes' thinking will show us at least five or six kinds of art used in connection with a church and services, so that there at least art is "the handmaid of religion." Similarly art finds a place in every part of human life. Clothing is necessary, but we try to dress with a regard for form and colour, and not just to wear anything that will keep us warm. Houses are necessary, but they ought to have beauty, too. Man was not meant to live in a pig-sty. There is nothing in life which may not be beautiful as well as useful, unless it is something wrong. And so we ought to try to have beauty always round us—good pictures (which does not necessarily mean expensive ones), good music, well-kept houses, and anything else that is reasonably possible. And our great cities, too, ought to be beautiful as well as useful, with beautiful buildings and big parks.

It would be worth while to stop and ask in what ways even a poor home may be beautiful (cleanliness, plants, etc.). And in the same way it might be a good thing for the class to discuss the faults of our big cities and the ways in which they might be improved (broader streets, better houses, more parks and gardens, the stopping of the smoke-nuisance, etc.).

Art not Sufficient by Itself.—Art will show us how to make our homes and our cities more beautiful. It will give us all sorts of beautiful things, and it will teach how to make and to see beauty for ourselves. But that is not nearly enough. There must be something more than beauty in our homes if there is to be happiness there. There must be goodness and love. And in the same way a great city may be beautiful, but it will be full of misery unless there are other things besides the fine buildings and magnificent views. There must be justice and loyalty and peace. In the end it all comes back to goodness. Without goodness beauty is worthless, and in the end such beauty is not even beautiful. “ Handsome is as handsome does.”

Art a Help to Goodness.—But though beauty is not goodness, and though without goodness it loses all its value, beauty may be a great help to goodness. We often say that it makes us feel better to go for a walk in the fields. This is not only because we get the exercise and the fresh air. It is because we are looking at beautiful things. A view from a mountain or over the sea makes us feel actually stronger and better. And a good picture has just the same effect. It carries our minds up to a higher level. It seems to suggest bigger and better thoughts. Good music does this, too ; in fact, for the time being it seems to carry us quite out of ourselves and makes us able to do things beyond our ordinary strength. That is why soldiers sing on the march. The stress and beat of the music carries them along, in spite of tired feet and heavy packs.

And so art can help goodness in many ways by bringing beauty to inspire us. We cannot always be on the mountains, or at the seaside, in the midst of the beauty which God creates. But art can bring a touch of that same beauty into our homes to live with us, and to help us all the time.

The Need of Good Art.—But this is only true if we use good art. Bad art is not really beautiful at all, and it does nothing to uplift and to help us. The pity of it is that there is such a tremendous amount of bad art. A great many of the pictures which we see in houses are not beautiful. They may be brightly coloured and

well framed, but they do not give us any sense at all of being lifted to a higher level. It is not very easy to say exactly what it is that makes one picture good and another picture bad, but it is possible to learn the difference by looking at good pictures until we learn to love them. Fortunately there are plenty of picture-galleries in which any of us, however poor, may see famous and really beautiful pictures.

In the same way the world is full of bad music, and bad music really does a great deal of harm. It excites people without making them nobler and better. And so here again we ought to try to learn to understand good music by listening to it when we have the chance, and we ought not to let ourselves be satisfied with the cheap, jingly songs, often with silly, vulgar words, that are continually going the round.

Art the Handmaid of Religion.—If what we have said is true we ought obviously to use the very best art in connection with our religion. We must try to make our services really beautiful, because the beauty helps us to worship. We must all have noticed the difference it makes when we go into a cathedral or a well-built church. The very lines of the columns and of the tracery of the windows seem to lift us up nearer to God, and a good choir with good music helps us in the same way. Art helps and serves worship at every point. And so it helps all our religious life ; for all our life should be religious, and everywhere art raises the level of life by bringing beauty to us.

There is, of course, a reason for all this which may be put in a very few words. God Himself is perfect Beauty, just as He is perfect Truth and perfect Goodness. For Beauty, Truth, and Goodness in the end meet and are one in God. Hence wherever there is Beauty at all, even in quite a small degree, there is God. That is why Beauty lifts us up to a higher level, whether it be the beauty of a sunset, or the inspired art of a great picture or poem, or the dignity and solemnity of some great act of worship. Beauty brings us nearer to God, because God is in it.

L. W. G.

LESSON 11

Music in Worship

There are Two Ways of Worshipping—in servile fear or in filial gladness. The latter is the better way: "Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before His Presence with a song" (Ps. 100). Leave servile fear to those poor souls who never have heard of Christ, "For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8 15). (Only don't leave the heathen to perish in their fear; we must get them to join our song. It is incomplete without them.) Now there is the whole reason for music in worship. We are glad; therefore we want to sing; if we sorrow, we sorrow not as men without hope, therefore even in our sorrow we can comfort ourselves by singing. But, again, being glad, we want to offer to God the best of every art we practise. We want our worship to be beautiful, therefore music must have its place. And of all the arts music has the most assured place in worship. Why? Well, for these reasons.

Music is the Most Universal of all the Arts.—Many of us cannot paint, or carve, or even write poems, but very few cannot sing in some sort of way. Still fewer do not sometimes feel a prompting to sing. If we cannot make a beautiful, we can at least make a joyful, noise unto the Lord. Music is at once the most universal and the most spontaneous of all the practical arts. Some folk seem to think that this means we need take no trouble with our singing. That is quite wrong. There are three ways of avoiding selfishness and laziness in regard to music in worship. They are these: (1) Take the trouble to sing. You have no right just lazily to refuse to sing the parts that are yours in the service. If the clergyman sings, "O Lord, open Thou our lips," you are preventing God from answering that prayer if you do not yourself help in the reply, "And our mouths shall show forth Thy praise." (2) Be willing to learn a new tune. Oh, the way people will not trouble to give God the gift of painstaking singing! "Oh, I like the old tunes best." Yes, and if every day you had the same pudding served up, would it be a good excuse when you complained about it, "Oh, I like cooking rice puddings best"? (3) Let the choir do their special singing alone. If, on a great festival, they sing a special service or anthem, preparing for it by weeks of careful training, you are not helping on the worship by trying to sing then also. You can afford to be silent, if, as we are

told, the very angels in Heaven are at times silent for your sake and the sake of your prayers (Rev. 8 1). The way to join heartily in the music of Church worship is to take your proper part, do it with care and interest, and be silent when you should be silent. (If you follow these rules you will be quite surprised to find how much, much more interesting worship becomes. The most boring thing in the world is to be *at* something but not of it or in it.)

Music is the Most Corporate of all Arts.—Music and religion are at one in this—you cannot practise them alone. That word practise is unfortunate, isn't it? Of course, you don't want people about when you are doing five finger exercises or vocal scales! Nor, for the matter of that, when you say your private prayers. But why do you practise scales and say your prayers? Why, to get into closer touch with goodness and beauty, and so be able to make life better and more beautiful for other people. Fancy a person practising scales for years and never wanting to please other people by performing beautiful music! Fancy someone saying prayers in private for years and never wanting to witness for God by taking part in public worship, or showing forth the love of God in daily conduct! All music demands these people at least; the composer, the performer, and the listener. All worship presupposes these people: God, the author and giver of life, the individual worshipper, and the others who encourage and are encouraged—and the more these are the better. Of course, at times one may have to be alone. Then one can worship God alone, just as at times one can play over a bit of *The Messiah* alone for one's own pleasure and profit. But a real performance of *The Messiah* requires a conductor, an orchestra, an organist, a choir with soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices. The boy who only sells programmes has his part to do. So in worship, and so in worship-music, "Young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord" (Ps. 148 12); and the boy who blows the bellows has his part, for without him "everything that hath breath" could not praise the Lord (Ps. 150 6).

Music is the Most Expressive of all Arts.—All art expresses emotions, but music goes deepest of them all. Beethoven's Symphony in C Minor (No. 5) says things which no one can express quite in words. The music of the last chorus in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* matters far, far more than the words. But music has another function still. Ordinarily emotion is very individual, and sometimes the expression of it can be very embarrassing. Now in worship, music both stirs and controls our

emotions. Perhaps one day you go to church with very special cause for gladness. How can you express it? You would like almost to shout at the top of your voice, but that would be very awkward for the other people. But hark, the organ strikes up a well-known chant, and the people rise, and you are invited to sing, "We praise Thee, O God." Why, there is your shout for you, so controlled that you can sing it without embarrassing other people. Or you hear the clergyman sing in inflexions now centuries old, "Lift up your hearts"; and you can sing, "We lift them up unto the Lord," in the very notes that for hundreds of years saints have offered up their praises. Or, again, another day you are listless and tempted to be inattentive. What is the organ playing? "Do, do, si, la, sol, do, re, mi"; and, almost without knowing how, you find yourself singing "All people that on earth do dwell"; and in spite of your listlessness you are helped to do what St. Paul recommends as the highest worship, and you "make melody in your heart unto the Lord."

J. R. D.

LESSON 12

Some well-known hymns and their stories: (1)

[*Note for the teacher.*—To do justice to this lesson it is essential that hymn-books should be referred to for the reading and study of each hymn as it is mentioned. Interest in the authorship or history of hymns aids an intelligent use of the words and of the adoption of St. Paul's resolution: "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."]

This and the two following lessons form a short course on favourite hymns. It is impossible to deal fully with such a subject in so small a space, but the teacher should aim at encouraging the pupils' interest in the praises they offer, in the hope that they will be stimulated to find out more about other hymns.

"Know you what is a hymn?"—'Tis singing, with the praise of God. If you praise God and sing not, you utter no hymn. If you sing, and praise not God, you utter no hymn. If you praise anything which does not appertain to the praise of God, though in singing you praise, you utter no hymn." This is St. Augustine's definition of a hymn and no better has yet been found. Three things are necessary: sound words, true music, and a thoughtful singer. It is with the words that these notes are concerned.

The earliest attempts at Christian hymns were substantially compositions of the Psalms of Miriam, Hannah, David, the Magnificat of St. Mary, the Benedictus of Zacharias, the Nunc Dimittis of Simeon. The hymn sung by Christ and the twelve before leaving the Passover would be the great Hallel (Pss. 113-118). The three most ancient hymns are the *Tersanctus* ("Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God of Hosts"), *Gloria in Excelsis* (an expansion of the Angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest"), and the *Gloria Patri*, sung in various forms. Some very old hymns were written originally in Latin or Greek, of which we sing the translations. "Of the Father's love begotten," written in the fifth century, is probably one of the two first Christmas hymns. The simple evening hymn, "The day is past and over," also written in the fifth century, by Anatolius, Bishop of Constantinople, is still to the scattered hamlets of the Greek Isles what "Glory to Thee, my God, this night" is to the villages of our own land. The writer and exact date of "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire," used at ordinations and the consecration of Bishops, are unknown. "Jesus, the very thought of Thee," is taken from a poem by the famous twelfth century monk, Bernard of Clairvaux. "Art thou weary" (eighth century) came from the lonely monastery of Mar Saba, about ten miles from Jerusalem. From the great abbey at Constantinople came "O happy band of pilgrims"; and "All glory, laud, and honour," also was given to us by the monks. The Church owes a deep debt of gratitude to the scholars who have translated these and many other old hymns into our language. Among them John Mason Neale's name stands pre-eminent. Archbishop Trench speaks of him as "The most profoundly learned hymnologist of our Church, who by patient researches, in almost all European lands, has brought to light a multitude of hymns unknown before." He was a saintly man. He founded St. Margaret's Sisterhood, at East Grinstead, "To minister to the bodily and spiritual needs of the sick and suffering poor."

By the hymns can be gauged the spiritual condition of the Church; for her progress and power have gone hand in hand with praise, while the songless periods have, as a general rule, been stagnant. A hymn-book shows the true unity of Christians in spite of the absence of uniformity. Men sing hymns together, irrespective of their theological differences. Toplady and Wesley angrily disputed upon points of theology, yet to-day it is well-nigh impossible to discover, unless one knows, which of their

hymns is whose. "Rock of Ages," by Toplady, was written partly to counteract the teaching of Wesley who had just propounded his doctrine of perfection, yet it is found in every Wesleyan hymn-book. "Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go," one of the most extensively used dismissal hymns we possess, was written by a Roman Catholic, and, at the opposite pole, "Nearer my God to Thee," another of our great favourites, by an Unitarian.

By a Tractarian.—In the year 1833, an orange boat bound for Marseilles, lay becalmed for a whole week in the Straits of Bonifacio. On board was an Oxford clergyman, John Henry Newman. Whilst seeking a rest in Italy he had been ill, and now, after much delay, was most anxious to get home. During the journey he wrote verses, and among them, one dark and foggy night, the beautiful lyric, "**Lead, kindly Light.**" Anxious at the state of the Anglican Church he loved so dearly, convinced that he had a work to do in England, yet unable to see clearly what it was and how he should set about it, or where it would lead, longing for home and friends, enfeebled in body by his recent illness, he breathed forth this prayer for Divine guidance. There has been much variety of opinion as to the meaning of the last two lines, but when Newman himself was asked what he intended, he said that after fifty years, he could not remember. Some years ago, at a Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, this hymn was chosen as suitable to be sung at the opening of each day's proceedings by Protestants, Romans Catholics, Jews, Muhammadans, and Heathen.

Another beautiful hymn written by the same author, after he had become a Roman Catholic, is "Praise to the Holiest in the Height," from his "Dream of Gerontius," 1865.

By an Evangelical.—The Rev. Henry Lyte, Incumbent of the parish of Lower Brixham, on the south coast of Devonshire, "made hymns for his little ones, and hymns for his hardy fishermen, and hymns for sufferers like himself." His health had been steadily declining, and he was obliged to seek a warmer clime. This grieved him much, for he loved the ocean and was never weary of gazing at it. "The swallows," he said, "are preparing for flight and inviting me to accompany them; and yet, alas, while I talk of flying, I am just able to crawl, and ask myself whether I shall be able to leave England at all." His daughter tells us: "The summer was passing away and the month of September (that month in which he was once more to quit his native land) arrived, and each day seemed to have a special value

as being one day nearer his departure. His family were surprised, and almost alarmed, at his announcing his intention of preaching once more to his people. His weakness, and the possible danger attending the effort, were urged to prevent it, but in vain. 'It was better,' as he used often playfully to say, when in comparative health, 'to *wear* out than to rust out.' He felt that he should be enabled to fulfil his wish, and feared not for the result. His expectation was well founded. He did preach, and amid the breathless attention of his hearers gave them the sermon on the Holy Communion. He afterwards assisted at the administration of the Holy Communion, and though necessarily much exhausted by the exertion and excitement of this effort, yet his friends had no reason to believe it had been hurtful to him. In the evening of the same day he placed in the hands of a near and dear relative the little hymn, '**Abide with me.**'" He died a few weeks later. In one of his latest poems he had written :

And grant me, swan-like, my last breath to spend,
In songs that may not die.

An old gentleman who was a member of Mr. Lyte's choir once said : " We were deeply attached to him. He had the gentlest expression and most winning manner possible, and yet I suppose we caused him more grief than all his trials of ill health. We left his choir and gave up teaching in his Sunday School. This is how it came about. A short while before he left us to go to Nice, where it was hoped the climate would benefit his health, some influential members of the Plymouth Brethren visited Brixham, and persuaded ten of us to join them. After due deliberation we went in a body to Mr. Lyte and told him that we intended to leave his church. He took it calmly enough, though we practically constituted his entire choir, and said that nothing would be farther from his thoughts than to stand between us and our consciences. We left him and never entered his church again. When 'Abide with me' came to be written, each of us was given a copy, and then we realised, perhaps more keenly than anyone else, the true meaning of the words :

When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

Among other hymns by the same author are : " Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven," " Far from my heavenly home," " God of mercy, God of grace ;" " Pleasant are Thy courts above."

E. J. G-S,

LESSON 13

Some well-known Hymns and their Stories (2)

[See notes preliminary to the previous lesson.

Hymn-books will be needed as before.

For the life of John Wesley see Lesson 51, which should be carefully studied in connection with Charles Wesley's hymns.]

By a Calvinist.—By general consent "**Rock of Ages**" has been assigned the place of honour among favourite hymns. Yet of all the hymns written by the Rev. Augustus M. Toplady this is the only one which is widely known and loved, and was written when he was Curate of Blagden in Somerset. He was walking in a beautiful spot a few miles from his home, where, "owing to the winding of the deep road between the rocks, the traveller is at times entirely shut in—alone in a vast solemn pit amid a profound silence. On quitting the gorge he passes on the left a huge grey cloven rock," locally known as the Rock of Ages. When approaching it, the author was overtaken by a terrible storm, and took shelter in its cleft. The story goes that he picked up a playing card, which he found lying at his feet, and wrote upon the back of it the hymn of which it has been said that "no other English hymn can be named which has laid so broad and firm a grasp upon the English-speaking world." Mr. Gladstone translated it into Greek, Latin, and Italian. The Prince Consort, when on his death-bed, constantly repeated it. "For," said he, "if in this hour I had only my worldly honours and dignities to depend upon, I should be poor indeed."

By a Methodist.—Though both the brothers John and Charles Wesley could write good hymns, Charles was the poet. Their hymns were written "to awake the careless, kindle a spirit of devotion, and instruct the people in the Faith and be to them a kind of creed in verse." Charles wrote about 6,500 in all, and used to write them at any time of the day or night. The best and most famous of them is "**Jesu, Lover of my soul**," yet it is one of his earlier hymns. It is almost as popular as "**Rock of Ages**." There is probably no hymn concerning the origin of which prettier legends have been woven. Most people know the one about the seabird which flew to Wesley for protection from the storm, and the other which tells how a dove, pursued by a hawk, flew for safety through the open window into his room where he sat at his desk. Another refers to the author's deliverance from the peril of a hurricane, and yet another of his writing

the hymn when hiding from his enemies under a hedge. We would like to believe any one of them, but they are without valid evidence. Although a Methodist, Charles Wesley, when he died at the age of 81, was buried in Marylebone churchyard, for he had said: "I have lived and I die in the communion of the Church of England and I will be buried in the churchyard of my parish church." A few other favourites which he wrote are: "Love divine, all love excelling"; "Soldiers of Christ, arise"; "Christ, Whose glory fills the skies"; "Lo! He comes with clouds descending"; "Hark! the herald-angels sing"; "Rejoice, the Lord is King."

By a Congregationalist.—In 1821, the natives of Fiji, many of whom had become Christian, were much affrighted by seeing a war canoe rapidly approaching their shores. It had come from Tonga, whose inhabitants were some of the most ferocious of the savage cannibal races of the South Sea Islands. But this party had come on a peaceful errand; no less than to buy a copy of the Christian's Book, for they had heard about the white man's religion. Two hundred and fifty miles had they rowed across the open sea, and that after the first canoe sent had never again been heard of. A missionary returned with the party to Tonga. About forty years after, "King George, the sable, of the South Sea Islands, but of blessed memory, gave a new constitution to his people, exchanging a heathen for a Christian form of government. Under the spreading branches of the banyan tree sat some thousand natives from Tonga, Fiji, and Samoa on Whit-Sunday, assembled for divine worship. Foremost among them all sat King George himself. Around him were seated old chiefs and warriors who had shared with him the dangers and fortunes of many a battle; men whose eyes were dim, and whose powerful frames were bowed down with the weight of years. But old and young alike rejoiced together in the joys of that day, their faces most of them radiant with Christian joy, love and hope. It would be impossible to describe the deep feeling manifested when the solemn service began, by the entire audience singing Isaac Watts' hymn: '**Jesus shall reign.**'" Isaac Watts also wrote among others the grand hymn: "O God, our help in ages past," a paraphrase of Ps. 90; "Come, let us join our cheerful songs"; "When I survey the wondrous Cross"; "Before Jehovah's awful Throne."

By a German Pastor.—The greater part of Martin Rinkhart's

professional life was passed amidst the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. It has been said that he composed "**Now Thank we all our God,**" in commemoration of the Peace of Westphalia ; but this cannot be relied upon. It is possible that he wrote the hymn in anticipation of the peace he knew must come some day. The walled town of Eilenburg, where he lived, became a refuge for many thousands of fugitives, and in consequence suffered from pestilence and famine. At one time Rinkhart was the only pastor in the place, the others having succumbed. He often read the burial service over the blackened bodies of some forty to fifty persons a day. Twice he saved the town from the Swedes. This brave and fearless man worked until he fell exhausted. The famine which followed strained his resources to the uttermost. It was probably during this period that he wrote his great hymn. But by the time the long looked for peace came he was a worn out man. The hymn is founded on Ecclus. 50 22-24. The fact that the regimental chaplains were ordered to preach from this passage at the special thanksgiving service when peace was declared may have suggested the story that the hymn was actually composed for that occasion.

By a Great Missionary Bishop.—The Rev. Reginald Heber, Rector of Hodnet, had gone to Wrexham to stay with his father-in-law, the Dean of St. Asaph, who was to preach on Whit-Sunday morning, 1819, in aid of the S.P.G. On the previous Saturday, whilst talking with friends in the library, the Dean asked his son-in-law to write "something for them to sing in the morning." Heber retired to a distant part of the room and sat down to write. "Well, what have you written?" the Dean called out at the end of fifteen minutes. Whereupon the three first verses of "**From Greenland's icy mountains**" were read aloud, to the delight of all who listened. "There, that will do very well," exclaimed the Dean. "No, no," replied Heber, "the sense is incomplete," and, sitting down again, he wrote in five more minutes the magnificent fourth verse. Even then he was not satisfied. "Let me add another, oh! let me add another"; but the Dean was adamant, and would allow of no further extension of the hymn, which was sung in the beautiful parish church of Wrexham next morning. The original MS. was sold in after years for forty guineas, and to-day reposes in the Rylands Library, Manchester. Some four years after writing this hymn the author became Bishop of Calcutta, and spent three years in

ceaseless travel, splendid administration, and saintly enthusiasm, at the end of which time he died, aged forty-three. He had the joy of ordaining the first native Indian, called Christian David, to the Church's ministry. Other favourite hymns by the same author are: "Brightest and best of the sons of the morning"; "God, that madest earth and heaven"; "By cool Siloam's shady rill"; "Holy, Holy, Holy."

E. J. G-S.

LESSON 14

Some well-known hymns and their stories : (3)

[See notes preliminary to Lesson 12.

Hymn-books will be needed as before.]

By a Reclaimed Blasphemer.—John Newton was born in London in 1723. His father, a stern, severe man, was a Commander in the Merchant Service. John's pious mother dedicated her boy to God in his infancy, and educated him, storing his mind with portions of Scripture. When he was seven, however, she died, and his religious training came to an end. At eleven he went to sea with his father, and in a few years had learnt to curse and blaspheme, and had become a godless and abandoned sailor. At eighteen he was impressed into the navy as a midshipman, but deserted, was re-captured, flogged, and degraded. He then sailed on board a slaver to Africa, where he became servant to a slave-dealer, and falling ill, suffered brutal treatment. His bed was a mat, his pillow a log. Burning with fever, scarcely able to slake his thirst, starved, so that the slaves secretly brought him scraps of food, ridiculed because of his feebleness, and insulted even by the negroes, he was left lying helpless. When well enough to go on board again, he was falsely accused, and in consequence chained to the deck half-clad, and for forty hours exposed to the rain and gales. At the end of fifteen months his spirit was broken, yet during this time he had mastered the first six books of Euclid, drawing the figures in the sand. He now lived a life of horrid impiety and profanity. There was no kind of wickedness he did not commit, and he was constantly reproved for his oaths and blasphemy. This was the man who lived to write, "**How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.**" On the voyage back to England, the boat encountered a violent storm, and was a wreck in a few

minutes. It nearly filled with water, and, all hope lost, John Newton began to think of his past life, and at last cried out, "O God, the God of my mother, have mercy on me." This was the turning point in his career. For the last forty-three years of his life he preached the Gospel, and, when almost too old and feeble to continue his work, on being asked to rest, replied, "What! shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak?" He, with the poet Cowper, composed the Olney Hymns. Another well known one by Newton is "Glorious things of Thee are spoken."

By a Beloved Parish Priest.—The Rev. S. Baring-Gould began his work as Curate at Horbury Bridge, Yorkshire. A mission-room was needed there for the people, so he took a cottage, in the upper room of which he held services, and in the lower, superintended a night-school for winter evenings. This accommodation soon proved all too small. A mission church had to be built, and it is with this little church that Baring-Gould's evening hymn of beautiful simplicity, "**Now the day is over,**" has been associated. One Whit-Tuesday, 1865, the mission scholars were to join with those of the parish church to celebrate their feast day. To unite forces, a steep, tiring hill of over a mile had to be ascended, and their priest thought it would help the little ones to sing on the way. Nothing seemed suitable, and although it was already Whitsun Eve, he sat down, and in fifteen minutes produced the processional, "**Onward, Christian Soldiers.**" It was printed, practised on Sunday, and sung on Tuesday. The admiring parents lined the route, and the invitation of the closing verse was addressed to them. The composer felt that the words, "We are not divided," were, unhappily, not quite accurate, when the hymn came to be sung far and wide, and substituted "Though divisions harass." His beautiful hymn, "**On the Resurrection morning,**" was written before he went to Horbury, a few months previous to his mother's death. Apparently it was written to comfort himself and his dear ones when entering the shadow of the threatened parting. In the early days of her widowhood, Queen Victoria derived much solace from this hymn.

By a very Courageous Bishop.—"Awake, my soul, and with the sun," and, "Glory to Thee, my God, this night," are known as Bishop Ken's morning and evening hymns. Losing both parents in his childhood, he was brought up by his sister, who married Isaac Walton. He was educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford. These two hymns are contained in a Manual of Prayers

which he wrote for Winchester College, directing the scholars to "be sure and sing the morning and evening hymns in your chamber devoutly." His character combined boldness, gentleness, modesty, and love. When the Bishopric of Bath and Wells fell vacant, Charles II., having had occasion to notice the brave and honest spirit of Ken, appointed him Bishop, remarking, "I want a man that can tell me my faults." He was among the seven Bishops, who, in James II.'s reign, were committed to the Tower for their stand against Rome, when the men from the West Country banded together to march to the Tower to defend their Bishop (Trelawny) singing :

And shall Trelawny die, and must Trelawny die?
Then twenty thousand Cornishmen shall know the reason why!

Their numbers grew, and they entered London with the challenge :

And shall the Bishops die, and must the Bishops die?
Then a hundred thousand Englishmen shall know the reason why!

The Bishops did not die; they were found "not guilty."

By a Woman.—"Our blest Redeemer" is an example of a hymn inspired by a sermon. Harriet Auber, a saintly lady who lived at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, was sitting in her bedroom thinking over the sermon she had just heard that Whit-Sunday morning. As she meditated, her thoughts took shape and resolved themselves into this beautiful hymn. Neither pencil nor paper were at hand, and whilst thus inspired, she wrote the verses, one by one, on a pane of glass in the window, with a diamond in a ring she happened to be wearing. The pane of glass remained there until the death of Miss Auber in 1862, and for some years after, but was eventually removed by an unknown person. The authoress lies buried in the churchyard opposite the house.

By a Sufferer.—Charlotte Elliott, at a comparatively early age, was a sufferer, and at 40 became a helpless invalid. She seems to have found relief by giving expression to her devotion and clinging faith through her hymns, which were published in 1836 in *The Invalid's Hymn Book*. When she was living at Brighton, her brother, the Rev. H. V. Elliott, having conceived the plan of erecting a college for the daughters of clergymen, decided that a bazaar was necessary to help forward the funds. All the members of the household were busy in making preparations,

except Charlotte, who lay weak and ill, unable to do anything. The great day came; she still lay on the sofa, and everyone had gone to help at the bazaar. Left alone, she took pen and paper, and wrote the hymn, "**Just as I am.**" In so doing she found calm and comfort. After a time her sister-in-law came in to report to her the progress of the bazaar, and after reading the hymn, asked for a copy. Thus it stole out from that room and was printed, unsigned. Some time afterwards a friend brought a copy to Miss Elliott, saying, "I am sure this will please you!" In after years the Rev. H. V. Elliott wrote, "In the course of a long ministry I hope I have been permitted to see some fruit of my labours; but I feel that far more has been done by a simple hymn of my sister's."

By a Sailor Missionary.—William Bullock, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy was once employed with his brother, Admiral Bullock, in surveying the coast of Newfoundland. While thus engaged, he was so horrified at the condition of the settlers, bereft of any kind of religious worship or instruction, that he resolved to resign his post in the navy and take Holy Orders. After he was ordained he became a missionary for the S.P.G. in this colony. He wrote the hymn "**We love the place, O God,**" in 1827, for the consecration of his first little mission church at Trinity Bay, and in that tiny building, amidst such poor surroundings, were first sung the words of that great hymn which has since been sung by crowded congregations at the consecration of many magnificent parish churches and Cathedrals, and at the induction of innumerable incumbents. Some seventy years afterwards the hymn was sung at the consecration of a new church erected on the same site. The writer's name and memory are held dear round Trinity Bay, for his influence was widely felt. He later became Dean of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

By a Children's Hymnist.—Although Cecil Frances Alexander wrote hymns for adults—"The roseate hues of early dawn"; "Jesus calls us: o'er the tumult" are examples—her greatest success lay in children's hymns, which are known throughout the English-speaking world. They "are charmingly simple and tender, clear in dogma, and of poetic beauty." Written for her Sunday School class, nearly all were read over to her small scholars before being published. "**There is a green hill**" is considered the best. She wrote it, in 1847, at the bedside of a child who was dangerously ill, and who ever afterwards spoke of it as "her hymn." It is based on the words in the Apostles'

Creed, "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." Mrs. Alexander said she got her idea for the first two lines from a little grass-covered hill just outside the city of Derry, which is still surrounded by its old walls. In the second line, she substituted "outside" for "without" on being asked by a very small child what was meant by a green hill not having a city wall. Several great composers have written tunes for it. Gounod was struck with its simplicity when repeated to him by his little daughter, who had learnt it in school in England, and he set it to music. Among other children's hymns by this author are, "Once in royal David's city," which might be sung as a Christmas hymn, being founded on, "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary"; "We are but little children weak"; "All things bright and beautiful"; "Do no sinful action."

Mrs. Alexander was the gifted wife of the Rev. William Alexander, who became Bishop of Derry and ultimately Primate of all Ireland.

E. J. G-S.

LESSON 15

First Sunday in Lent

Temperance

[For the teacher's reading and study : Passages referred to in the notes. *Catechism* : Duty towards God and Duty towards Neighbour.

NOTE.—In this lesson the word "temperance" will be used in its proper meaning to signify the opposite of "intemperance" or excess.

When the disuse of all alcoholic liquors is meant the words "total abstinence," or "teetotalism," will be used. Total abstinence is certainly in some cases, possibly in all cases, the best way to temperance. But clear thinking makes it desirable to use words in such a way as to make plain what exactly we desire to affirm. And charity, fairness, and common sense should prevent us from using language which might seem to deny the title of "temperate" to anyone who used alcohol in strict moderation.

The connection of this lesson with Lent is obvious, and should be used by the teacher.]

The Nature of Alcohol and the Right Attitude towards it.—Before we can begin to discuss the Christian's duty in relation to alcohol we must clearly understand that there can be nothing evil in alcohol itself. St. Paul declares that God has created food "to be received with thankfulness of (i.e. by) them which believe and

know the truth. For every creature of God (i.e. everything that God has created) is good, and nothing to be refused,¹ if it be received with thankfulness " (I. Tim. 4 3, 4). To speak, as some people do, as if alcohol were *evil in itself* is both wrong and silly. It is wrong, for it implicitly denies either that everything which God made is good, or else that alcohol is one of the things created by God. And to deny that God is " Maker of Heaven and earth " and of all things therein, and to believe that some things owe their existence to the Powers of Evil, and are therefore essentially bad, is the heresy called Manicheism. And to say that alcohol is *evil in itself* is silly ; for how can a *thing* be morally bad ? Man may make a bad use of a thing, but then it is the man who is wicked, not the thing that is evil. Alcohol is a substance which can be produced artificially by man, but which also occurs in nature, and is composed of the three chemical elements carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen, its chemical formula being C^2H^6O . Sugar, which also can be prepared by man, but which likewise occurs in nature, is composed of the same elements in a different proportion, its formula being $C^6H^{12}O^6$. There can be no more reason for calling alcohol evil in itself, or essentially bad, than for saying the same of sugar. It is most important to grasp this truth, for unbalanced language on this point does the temperance cause much harm.

After what has been said, some people may think that there can be no good reason for teetotalism at all. That is certainly not so. St. Paul gives us excellent teaching in this and similar cases, in these two texts :

" All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient : all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any " (I. Cor. 6 12).

" All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient : all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not " (I. Cor. 10 23).

We see here the principles which decide whether or not a person should practise total abstinence.

1. It May be Lawful, i.e. not a breach of the moral law, for you to use alcoholic drink ; *is it expedient* ? In answering this question a man must consider many things. Every man is entitled to spend a certain amount of time and money in mere pleasure. Can you justify the time and money spent on alcohol ?

¹"Nothing to be refused" is old-fashioned English for "in no way to be refused" or "not at all to be refused."

Many men, without ever being drunk, spend time in public-houses which might be much better devoted to the house, and money on drink out of all proportion to their income. Has a man, with a wife and two children, who is earning £3 a week, any right to spend 7s. a week on beer? It is no good saying, "Society ought to pay him a better wage"; his duty is to his wife and children. Has a rich man any right to spend 7s. on wine with his lunch, and a lot more on odd whiskies and sodas, and champagne on special occasions, while giving little to his Church, the hospitals, and charity generally? Is not alcoholic liquor, *unless it can be proved to do a man good*, and indeed to be necessary to his health, one of the things on which a Christian will be very careful not to spend money needlessly?

2. **"I Will Not be Brought under the Power of Any."**—Nothing grows on a man so much as the use of alcohol. No one, who has taken it even in moderation, knows how hard it is to give it up till he tries. It is just the man who is always saying, "I can take it, or leave it alone. It doesn't bother me," who is most under its power. And we ought to remember its treacherous and insidious power; no man or woman, now a hopeless drunkard, *meant to become a drunkard when taking the first glass*.

3. **"All Things Edify Not."**—Edify = build up. It may be used of ourselves, meaning that not all things promote our moral and spiritual growth; or of others, meaning that not all things which we do set a good example, and so promote the moral and spiritual growth of others. There can be little doubt that among the Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, and Scandinavian races drunkenness is a national vice, in the way that it is not among Latin races. In view of the ravages of drink in England ought not Christians to say "If alcoholic drink makes my brother to offend, I will drink none while the world standeth?" But the whole eighth chapter of I. Corinthians should be read and weighed. It is full of teaching.

Some difficult points.—Many people find real difficulty in passages of Scripture. We can only notice:

Ps. 104 14, 15.—Undoubtedly God created wine, as He did everything else, and, if no one ever misused it, all who liked might use it. But we have seen in the last paragraph the reasons why we should give it up *for the sake of the weak brother*.

St. John 2 1-11.—Can wine, and alcoholic drink, be an evil when Christ did a miracle to supply it? But all through this lesson we have insisted that not drink, but its misuse is the evil.

Among the frugal peasants of Galilee there was little drunkenness. Wine was the daily drink of the people, as it is in Italy to-day, and was little abused. We may well doubt if Christ would do a miracle to-day to supply beer, and still less whisky, to an English family.

I. Tim. 5 23.—Here St. Paul expressly bids Timothy take some wine. Certainly he does, and teetotallers should welcome the passage, for it tells us some valuable things we should not otherwise know. They are : (a) That even in the Early Church there were strong total abstainers, and that Timothy was one. (b) That he was so strong a teetotaller that even when he had been often ill he would not break his pledge till he had consulted St. Paul, his spiritual father, and got his consent.

N.B.—This is not the place to consider the effects of alcohol from a physical and physiological stand-point. But the teacher should study the latest scientific teaching on the effects of alcohol on (a) the body, (b) the mental processes, and (c) the moral judgment and powers of moral control. Science seems to be establishing, on a sure basis, the fact that alcohol is never beneficial, but always, even in small quantities, harmful to man. If this is *proved* Christian duty will be plain. We shall have no right to injure our body, "which is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I. Cor. 6 19).

P. G.

LESSON 16

Second Sunday in Lent

The Psalter : A book of praise and devotion
1. How it came into existence

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : The Psalms referred to in the notes (preferably in the Revised Version). As in other lessons the headings should be carefully observed for guidance in developing the instruction. The aim of the present notes is to give a more intelligent understanding of how the Psalter has come into existence, so as to aid understanding in worship and meditation.]

This and the four following lessons form a short course continuing the Old Testament study of the two previous years, the notes of which should be consulted.

Our modern English hymn-books are made up from earlier books of various dates with fresh hymns added. Sometimes the names of the writers are printed, sometimes changes are made in particular lines, sometimes the author's name is not known or is

given wrong. What we call the Psalter is the last hymn-book of the Jews before the Romans destroyed the Temple at Jerusalem, and it has the same features as have just been noted in modern hymn-books.

It has Hymns from several Earlier Hymn-books.—One such collection of hymns is to be seen in Psalms 120–134, a little hymn-book used by pilgrims as they journeyed up to Jerusalem for the great feasts. This book was called perhaps **Psalms of Ascent**. Another collection contained psalms of thanksgiving, sung in the Temple. These psalms, e.g. 106, 150, all begin with the word Hallelujah, i.e. Praise Jah or the LORD. A third hymn-book was prepared, it would appear, for use in the synagogues by the Temple **Director of Music or Choir Master**. He, like the final editor, drew on earlier collections, and one or two of these also deserve to be noticed.

A hymn-book seems to have been prepared for use in the synagogues of the Jews, who were carried away captive to Babylon. In this book the name Jehovah for God was generally avoided. Why this was done is not known, but in another hymn-book—"of Asaph"—our Psalms 50 and 73–83, all religious poems of a didactic or teaching character, the same peculiarity is found.

Another small collection—"of the sons of Korah"—apparently spoke of Jehovah, but while some of these psalms (Psalms 42–49) were incorporated in the Babylonian hymn-book and had God substituted for Jehovah, some others not used in that hymn-book were included in our present psalter (Psalms 84, 85, 87, 88) and in these Jehovah appears.

Another hymn-book was given the name of **David's**, whose memory was cherished for his victories, his justice and his loveliness. That king left behind him a reputation for musical and poetic ability, which led to his being regarded as the father of psalmody and the writer even, according to some looser speakers, of all psalms. It is hard to be positive as to any psalm being actually from his pen, but certainly there are psalms which either he or some later poet has written to suit to some extent the circumstances of various periods of his life. Still, that was not the case with all or even most of the hymns in this Psalter of David, and still less with those of the whole final Psalter as we have it.

Duplicates.—Sometimes we find in our hymn-books two forms of the same hymn or of the same tune. The Old Hundredth,

e.g., is sung in two different ways, with varying length of notes and varied harmonies. There are two versified forms of the Twenty-third Psalm—"The King of Love my Shepherd is, Whose goodness faileth never," by H. W. Baker, and "The God of Love my Shepherd is," by G. Herbert. Another example is the use side by side of two translations of an old Greek hymn, viz. "Hail, gladdening Light," by John Keble, and "O glad-some Light," by H. W. Longfellow. This, of course, shows us that the hymn-book in which these two hymns are found side by side, has been preceded by earlier hymn-books. In the same way we do well to notice that in our present Psalter there are duplicates—i.e. what was originally a single Psalm has been included in two of the old hymn-books we have previously considered, and having been re-touched or adapted by one or both of those old editors, has been considered by the final editor of our present Psalter worthy to be included in his final book in both forms. We may first look at Psalm 14, taken from the David's Psalter with Jehovah (the LORD), spoken of as looking down upon men. Then we may look at Psalm 53, from the Babylonian Psalter, with God substituted for Jehovah. Again Psalm 108 from "the Choir Director's book" is with small alterations made up of Psalms "of David" 57 8-12 and 60 7-14. We must therefore think of the Psalter—although Jews often spoke of the book as "David's"—as a collection of hymns edited like our own books from a number of earlier books, themselves containing hymns by various authors. In some cases an editor joined together two Psalms in different metres—as if we had a hymn-book making one hymn of "Now the day is over," and "Glory to Thee, my God, this night." This is the case with Psalm 19, of which from v. 8 onwards was once a separate Psalm.

Supremacy of the Present Psalter.—Sometimes we may meet with old hymn-books and chant-books in second-hand book-shops, and if we examine them, comparing them with the hymn-books and chant-books we have to-day, we are surprised to find how poor most of the hymns and chants seem to be, except those that we should say have lived and are found in the books of to-day. In the same manner the compiler of our present Psalter was inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit to select from the earlier books practically, and perhaps absolutely, all that was of the highest spiritual value. Certainly these earlier collections have entirely disappeared. The new book supplied in one

volume, psalms for the Temple festivals and services, psalms for the pilgrims coming up to the Temple, psalms for the synagogue-services, for the Passover-services in the home, and for all the needs which the older books had met. Instead of a number of books, one was now enough, and did the office of all; just as the English Prayer Book took the place of a number of separate books (see Lessons 7 and 8).

The Division of the Psalter.—The Law, as it was called, was contained in Five Books (the first five in our Bible), and on the pattern of this the Psalter was divided into Five Books. (These are marked in the Revised Version.) Every psalm, when sung, had appended to it a doxology—as many of our hymns have a doxology added, e.g. to take a well-known hymn, Bishop Ken's, "Awake, my soul," often has "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow" set to be sung after either half of it, when it is shortened by dividing it into two. For the Jews, five doxologies were provided, and one of these was sung at the end of every psalm. These doxologies are given at the end of the five books, and each psalm was ended with the doxology at the end of the book in which the psalm was. See Psalms 41 13, 72 18, 19, 89 52, 106 48, 150. (This has been lost sight of in the way our Psalters are printed.) Christians using the Psalms have substituted another doxology which gives expression to the fuller knowledge of God which Jesus Christ the Son of God brought to men.

Further, the Jews arranged a three-year cycle of readings from the Law, the Jewish year having 50 or 51 Sabbaths in an ordinary year, and 54 or 55 in a leap year, when an extra month is inserted. Parallel therefore to the 153 readings from the Law, they arranged the Psalms to number 150, in order to get this number breaking up some Psalms into two (e.g. Psalms 42 and 43 are two parts of a single hymn as are 9 and 10). However, this did not provide psalms of uniform length, and sometimes a psalm which was the suitable hymn for some particular occasion was too long for that occasion. Some English hymn-books have marks to show where an omission may most conveniently be made if a hymn is too long for a particular service: the Jewish Psalter did likewise, it is believed. In the Bible (though not in the Prayer Book) the reader will have observed the word *Selah* put at the end of some verses. It is thought that this marks where the singing may cease; a short instrumental interlude would be played, and then the doxology be sung.

LESSON 17

Third Sunday in Lent

The Psalter : A book of praise and devotion
2. Its use by Christians

[*For the teacher's reading and study :* The Psalms referred to in the notes, together with the following references in the Gospels : St. Mark 1 11, 24, 8 38, 11 9, 12 10, 11, 36, 14 18, 34, 62, 15 24, 34 ; St. Matthew 3 17, 4 6, 5 5-8, 13 35, 16 18, 27, 21 9, 16, 42, 22 44, 23 38, 26 64, 27 34, 35, 46 ; St. Luke 1 50, 68, 71, 3 22, 4 10, 34, 13 27, 29, 19 38, 20 17, 42, 22 46, 69, 23 46 ; St. John 1 49, 2 18, 6 31, 10 34, 12 13, 27, 13 18, 15 25, 17 12, 19 24, 29, 36.]

The Hebrew Christians.—The first Christians were Jews, and the Christian Church was the new form given by our Lord to the Jewish national Church. As a matter of course, therefore, these Jewish Christians continued to worship in the synagogues as long as they were allowed to do so and in the Temple, and joined in the ordinary Jewish services, adding to these, however, the special Christian observance of the Holy Communion. Even when proselytes became Christians, no change was necessary in this regard : the Law, and the Prophets, were read, and the Psalms sung, as before.

The Gospel Leaven.—But it must be noticed that the Christians had received from our Lord a new insight into spiritual things. They had been given a point of view different from that of the Scribes. They had learnt a little at any rate as to the right way to understand the Scriptures. Our Lord had taught that the highest spiritual conceptions that man could grasp were given to him from God, and that where anything in the Bible contradicted these, that part of the Bible had been a temporary concession made by God to men's hardness of heart and ignorance. Thus the permanent union in wedlock of one man with one woman was God's ideal ordinance, while the permission found in other parts of the Bible to divorce a wife was a lowering of the ideal to meet the possibilities of human nature in an early and unspiritual age; This spiritual method of interpreting the Bible once grasped, the lawyer's hair-splitting practised by the Scribes was seen to be mistaken, and the whole Bible was to be read in a fresh spirit; Besides, our Lord gave practical examples of how this fresh method would work. Passages of prophecy neglected by the Scribes because they did not fall with their materialistic view of the nation's hopes and destiny were shown by our Lord to present

a lofty spiritual ideal of duty and God's purposes, and therefore they must be more regarded than the materialistic promises.

As to the Psalms, we know from three or four incidents something of how our Lord used them. At the outset of His ministry a verse from the Ninety-first Psalm seemed to be capable of encouraging Him to astound the worshippers in the Temple and to compel their acceptance of His claims by flinging Himself from the pinnacle there, confident that His Father would preserve Him from consequences entailed by the ordinary law of gravitation. This application of the Psalm He rejected as wrong, since it contradicted a general rule of the spiritual life, viz. that men are not to test God's fidelity to His promises by laying down according to their own—unspiritual and ignorant—notions conditions of experiment and then demanding that God shall fulfil those conditions. Here our Lord's use of the Psalms shows that they cannot be taken without thought as precisely expressing our individual experiences and hopes. On the other hand, He Himself, as He hung upon the Cross, used the twenty-second Psalm in the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and thus set us the example of applying the Psalms for our individual needs. They are not simply hymns to express the joy, the sorrow, the penitence, the trust in God, of a mass of worshippers; they may rightly be taken to guide our prayers and praises when we speak to God in the privacy of our chambers, in the heart's secret communings with God.

Again on two occasions we are told our Lord argued with the Scribes from their own standpoint and with their own methods of interpretation using two verses from the Psalms. In Psalm 82 the writer addressed the judges of his time who should have given just judgment in God's name and warned them that punishment would fall upon them,—“I said, Ye are gods . . . but ye shall die like (ordinary) men.” Our Lord used this language of the Psalm to justify from the Scribes' own point of view His language in calling God His Father, before the hour was come to speak more plainly. And when the hour was come for Him to declare Himself in preparation for His crucifixion, He took a verse from Psalm 110 which the Scribes ascribed to David's pen, and deduced from it that the Messiah, the Anointed King of whom the Scribes' interpretation held the Psalm to speak, must be one greater than David himself,—“Jehovah Himself said to my lord, 'Sit thou on My right-hand' . . . David therefore calls him lord, and how is he his son?”

Here our Lord's example shows that for the spiritual use of the Psalms, critical and historical knowledge is not necessary, however desirable it may be. The Psalms no more than other parts of Scripture are primarily for use to furnish sources for argument even on theological topics; their spiritual message to our souls for the guidance and encouragement of our spiritual life is what we have to seek when we read them. Learning and scholarship may save us from forming wrong ideas on some religious subject, but if we have little or no learning, we can use the Psalms to help us to be good Christians, so long as we keep in mind our Lord's example and seek the spiritual message, correcting it by our Lord's own teaching, if the Psalms' teaching is not the highest because it was conditioned by the capacity of the writer.

The Gentile Christians.—The leaven of our Lord's teaching and example must gradually have affected the Jewish Christians' use and interpretation of the Psalms. In time the cursing of an enemy would be interpreted in an allegorical way as expressing the Christian's abhorrence of sin, or might even be taken to be contradictory of our Lord's teaching and only explicable as the utterance of a time of ignorance. Further, Christians saw in many passages expressions anticipating in a wonderful way incidents, great or small, in the Christ's Incarnation, Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. That the writers had been expressing ideas referring to events in their own actual experience, or in the experience they imagined to have belonged to David or others, made no difference to this Christian use of the Psalms. Full of the recollection of the facts embodied now for us in the Creed, the Christian could not help connecting them with words so aptly describing them. And for the Jewish Christian this method of interpretation was on the very lines of the Scribes' interpretations, so that he could meet the Scribes on equal ground with their own arms and contend that Jesus of Nazareth must be the Christ, the Anointed King of God's promise and of Israel's hope.

But for the Gentile Christian the case was different. He was not so greatly concerned with the contention that Jesus was the Christ; for him the crucial issue was that Jesus was the Saviour of the world, and that God's Christ, when He came, was "a light to lighten the Gentiles." Therefore he read the Scriptures and used the Psalms, but was perhaps more ready to make selections. Certain portions were read and sung in the service of the Eucharist, and beyond that it was the Gospels and the Epistles of the Apostles

which fed his piety. This seems to have been all that the average Gentile Christian studied of the Bible. At each Holy Communion there was a sermon to help him to profit by the Scriptures read, and to instruct him in the Christian traditions of duty and of truth. But for most, this was all. There were, however, before long, associations of Gentile Christians who aimed at more. There were University classes at Alexandria where Christianity was explained and defended with learning wide and solid, and soon after monasteries arose which encouraged much reading of Scripture. The Psalms especially were studied: it was felt that they supplied matter readily available for spiritual use, and thus some aimed at reading the Psalms through once every fortnight, once every week, or even once a day. Because they were hymns, this reading was done by singing them. It was not intended that the singer should be in the mood of the author of each Psalm, or that he should be making each sentiment as he uttered it, his own. The object was merely to get a familiar knowledge of the Psalms—and singing was more full of life than reading—and then as a man's soul felt penitence, or joy, distress before persecution or before temptation, the darkness of doubt, the approach of death, the Psalms made so familiar by continual reading would rise to the lips, expressing in inspired language the soul's various feeling.

T. N.

LESSON 18

Fourth Sunday in Lent

The Psalter : A Book of Praise and Devotion 3. Its Use by the Church in England

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : The Psalms referred to in the notes. Further help may be obtained from the reading of Prothero's *The Psalms in Human Life* (Nelson, 1s. 6d.).

The treatment given in the notes is representative and intended as a guide to the teacher, who should select from and expand the material as may best serve the edification of the class.]

The English Church.—Last week we saw how monks and other Christians who desired a fuller knowledge of Christianity intellectually than the ordinary uneducated Christian possessed, aimed at familiarity with the Psalter. "To learn the Psalter by heart was, in monastic life, the first duty of a novice." The same high

value set upon the Psalms because Christians found them so full of spiritual stimulus and teaching appears from the fact that when the first translation into Slavonic was made in the time of our King Alfred the Great, for the forefathers of the Russians just converted to Christianity, while all the New Testament was translated, the Book of Psalms alone from the Old Testament was selected for translation. The reason may again be stated thus : in the Psalter " Nature is treated in its unity rather than in its detail . . . as the embodiment of one overruling spiritual power " ; it appeals " to the simple elemental feelings of " mankind ; it encourages " that sense of awe before the Divine invisible omnipresence which gives its sanction to the voice of conscience."

When the Church in England reformed itself, this sense of the spiritual value of the Psalms intimately known, led to the clergy being directed to read or sing through the Psalter once a month. In practice this has led in the past to the laity also knowing much of the Psalms by heart, but there has been much ignorance as to their use. It is necessary to keep in mind that we have to judge the value, and truth, and spirituality of any verse we use in the way that our Lord has taught us to do. In the Revised Prayer book the laity have been thought of and the Psalms have been selected, partly to give the Christian who only reads or sings them in Church, just the Psalms that are most plainly spiritual and Christ-like, partly to have the Psalm more specially apt for the general line of thought that the rest of the service would be suggesting on particular Sundays. We may perhaps usefully look at some of these special Psalms.

For Easter Morning we have Psalm 2 Selected.—The writer speaks of David idealised as the Anointed King installed at Jerusalem with an everlasting covenant of world-wide dominion. This was never realised in David (who was installed King at Hebron, and did not rule the whole world any more than did any other Hebrew King). But the Holy Spirit put the thought into the writer's mind that the historic reality was only a pale anticipation of what should be, and Christians have throughout the ages felt that our Lord " in His reign from heaven over the world is gradually fulfilling this ideal." At His Baptism He heard the voice from heaven, " Thou art My Beloved Son " ; at the Transfiguration when He chose, being truly God, to be made perfect in His manhood, by suffering rather than like Moses and Elijah to pass without suffering into the glorified humanity of

the resurrection, His disciples heard the voice, "This is My Chosen Son: hear Him" (not Moses or Elijah). In one of the earliest Christian prayers of thanksgiving the joining together of Herod and Pilate against our Lord on the day of Crucifixion is regarded as giving a new significance to the opening words of the Psalm (Acts 4 24-30). Plainly we can sing it as an inspired anticipation of the glorious sovereignty of our Lord begun with His Resurrection on Easter Day.

Psalm 16 is a Hymn of Confidence in God.—The writer, dissociating himself from the apostates, rests upon God's guidance and protection in life and death. God will not abandon him in the underworld of the dead, but not allowing him to sink into the pit there where the wicked are, will bring him into the place where he will have everlasting felicity in communion with God. The language used was interpreted, when men had learnt the hope of a resurrection, to promise that there should be deliverance out of the dead underworld, and both St. Peter (Acts 2 25-32) and St. Paul (13 35) found in the Psalm language which had first found realisation in our Lord's Resurrection. He was "the holy one" whom the writer had ideally anticipated. But the Christian, who holds fast to the hope that Christ is the first-fruits and that He will at the last bring with Him those that are His, will feel that the Psalm may also express his own trust in God. So one of the Scottish Covenanters read it on the evening before his execution, and Henry Martyn "wrote down notes on it" on his homeward journey five weeks before this death.

Psalm 111, One of the Hallel ("Praise Jehovah") hymns needs no comment. We sing with joyful thanksgiving to God for His purpose, carried out, of redeeming mankind. The three evening Psalms—113, 114, and 118 are all Hallel's and are easily interpreted on the same method. What is said of the earthly Jerusalem and of the deliverance of the Israelite nation from Egypt we spiritualise, making it refer to the Christian Church—the new Israel—and her deliverance from sin and death. Psalm 118 consists of (1) a part, verses 2-18, sung by a procession in the streets where a solo voice leads and a chorus replies, and (2) a part, verses 19-26, sung in the Temple by priest and people alternately. It celebrates a victory over enemies, which they are acknowledging on this feast day as due to Jehovah's aid. It is not hard to find the spiritual interpretation of the victory and of the rejected corner-stone—in the first instance the Jewish people so contemptible in the world's estimation, and then our

Lord as the Representative in Whom all the Jewish mission to the world was summed up. But again it may be noticed that when the French Huguenot leaders Condé and Coligny had escaped across the Loire in the night of August 25th, 1568, " their horses wading only to their knees " and " as day broke, the river rose in flood " and " the fugitives were saved," " they fell on their knees on the farther bank, and, gave thanks, singing the Hundredth and Fourteenth Psalm, ' What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest, and thou, Jordan, that thou wast driven back ? ' " In the siege of Derry from April 17th to July 31st in 1689 by Lord Tyrconnel, James II.'s Lord-Lieutenant, George Walker, left sole governor by his colleague's death, preached in the cathedral a sermon still preserved, in which he drew on Psalm 118 to hearten the starving inhabitants. We can imagine how the words went home with strange power, " It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me." Yet it must again be said that this direct application to ourselves, involved in confused controversies, too often wrapt in ignorance and blindness, is a use in which we must exercise great caution, remembering our Lord's rejection of such a use in His temptation. For spiritual needs we need not hesitate to use the words, but for political, polemical, personal circumstances we may well use caution.

For the morning of Ascension Day Psalms 8 and 21 are selected. On that day we realise afresh how the Perfect Representative of Humanity has now—to use the language of the Apocalypse—sat down beside the Father and humanity in Him is subject to God alone. The old evening hymn tells how man made in God's image is on earth supreme, though he feels that he is insignificant when he sees the wonders of the sky at night. The Twenty-first Psalm—in part a thanksgiving for victory sung with a chorus during a sacrifice, in part a declaration after the sacrifice that God will assuredly give yet more successes—fitly gives utterance to the Christian's exultation at his Master's final triumph and his confidence that Christ's sovereignty shall spread yet more, as the Holy Spirit works in men's hearts, till opposition is ended—the enemies of the Psalm being interpreted to be the selfishness and sinful wilfulness that resists God's call to righteousness and holiness.

LESSON 19

Passion Sunday

How the Bible came to be written

[*Note for the teacher.*—Should any part of the following notes seem new or difficult the teacher should go bravely on and think them out with care for the sake of the pupils. The Bible did not drop printed from Heaven, think as we will, and nothing but good can come from giving our young people a true and reverent account of how it did in fact come into being.

For further help the following books may be consulted : *Introduction to Old Testament Study*, by E. B. Redlich (Macmillan, 6s.) ; *Old Testament Study*, by Sara A. Burstall (Arnold, 2s. 6d.) ; and *How We got our Bible*, by J. Paterson Smyth (Sampson, Low, 3s. 6d.).

A copy of the Hebrew Bible and of a Greek New Testament would be useful for exhibition to the class.]

The English Bible a Translation.—When our soldiers went across to France during the Great War, they had the fact brought home to them that words which carry meaning to one nation have to be translated for another nation to understand. Besides they learnt that a translation might be incorrect because the translator either did not understand well enough the language in which the idea was first expressed or did not have mastery enough of the other language to give the same idea expression in it. This applies to our English Bible, which we must keep reminding ourselves is a translation from the Hebrew spoken by the Jews before our Lord's day and from the Greek spoken by many Jews in His day. The translation we read in the ordinary English Bible—called the Authorised Version because it was the version directed to be read in Church—was the last of some half-dozen translations made about four hundred years ago. But language is always changing : " tank " means now something it did not mean years ago, and so with many other words. Thus for this reason besides those already mentioned, the Authorised Version—even where it was a good translation when it was made—is a poor and misleading translation to-day. In consequence of scholars feeling this, a new translation—the Revised Version—was completed in 1884, and it gives us in many places more exactly what the original said. St. Paul, e.g. (I. Cor. 13 13), said " the greatest is love " as the R.V. expresses it, while the A.V. has " charity," the word in the original being the same as in " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself " (St. Luke 10 27).

Copying of the Bible-text.—This does not end the difficulty. Before printing was used, each copy had to be made by hand and

it was hard to avoid slips in writing or mistakes in reading the book from which the copy was being made. Stops were not invented for a very long time; the manuscript might be old, the letters might be faint, the paper be frayed. Thus some copies had mistaken words, and scholars have methods and rules to-day which were not known four hundred years ago, to settle what the correct old text was. In St. Mark 6 20 a word was miscopied in this way, and for the correct " (Herod), when he heard him (i.e. John the Baptist), *was much perplexed*" read in the R.V., the A.V. has "did many things."

Hebrew writing.—Still more difficult is the case of the Old Testament. Till some centuries after our Lord's life on earth, Hebrew writing was like a reporter's shorthand: it had the consonants, and the vowels were not written. Men like the scribes especially knew the words by heart, and the written consonants merely helped them to recall the order of the words. But still it did come about that different people read the words in some cases differently. We can see what the result would be like by imagining a verse in the English Bible written in this way. In Proverbs 8 17 we might have "I LV them that LV Me," and while some might read it correctly "I love them, etc.," others might read it—and say, too, that it was good sense—"I leave them that leave Me."

The Septuagint.—As we said above, in our Lord's day many Jews spoke Greek. More than that they had a translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew into Greek. This translation, called the Septuagint, because legend said that seventy men made it, is older by a thousand years than any manuscript of the Hebrew Old Testament, and scholars find that the men who made this translation had in many places a different Hebrew text—whether a better text or a worse is in many passages a matter of discussion. Gentile Christians and Jewish living outside Palestine used this Greek Old Testament, and the Hebrew was for a long time not much known. Our Prayer Book Psalms were translated from the Latin, which in its turn again had been translated from this Greek, and that is the reason in many cases that what we read in the Psalter is so different from the Authorised or the Revised Version. A good example is to be found in Psalm 37 38. Here the Prayer Book says, "Keep innocency and take heed to the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last." The Authorised Version more correctly has, "Mark the perfect man and consider the upright,

for the end of that man is peace." If we bear in mind that *things* and *persons* are not always distinguished in Greek wording so that, e.g., where the A.V. says in the Lord's Prayer "deliver us from evil" it is tolerably certain that our Lord said "from the evil one," we can see that these two translations come from one original something like this: "Keep (in view) the innocent (man *or* thing) and consider the man *or* thing that is upright, for the end of that (man *or* thing) is peace." Because the Greek translation was made so long ago the Prayer Book Psalter deserves study even where the Revised Version is different from it.

The Original Text.—But even now this does not answer the question "How did the Bible come to be written?" We must next notice that pious Christians gradually fastened on certain books—written as they believed by apostles or associates of the Apostles as giving such full and accurate teaching on certain aspects of Christianity that they were to be regarded as authoritative records of what Christ had appointed His apostles to hand on as His teaching. This collection of books—memoirs of our Lord's Ministry (St. Mark), memoirs with notes of His teaching (St. Matthew), a historical record of the rise of the Christian Church (St. Luke and Acts), a spiritual interpretation of our Lord's Ministry and teaching (St. John), official correspondence of St. Paul, a dissertation on our Lord's relation to God and humanity (Hebrews), a pamphlet to encourage Christians during persecution by a vision of the course of God's purpose in history (the Revelation) and a few smaller letters—was regarded by the Christian Church after some doubt and debate over one or two of the less important books as a collection of inspired writings which might, as belonging to God's New Covenant, be set side by side with the Hebrew books of the Old Covenant or Testament. The entire double collection was called *The Canon* or measuring-rod, by which any religious teaching might be measured or tested.

The Old Testament books were collected under the guidance of the Holy Spirit by the Jewish religious authorities. They too had some doubt and debate over some of the less important books, but apart from these the story is rather like that of the New Testament. A number of separate and unrelated books were gradually gathered into one.

1. Prophets received from God inspired messages, and from the time of Amos onwards some prophets wrote down their messages. These were revised, recast, repeated, as were the Books of Jeremiah and of Isaiah.

2. The priests from very ancient times had traditional rules of religious ceremony and of justice. These were reshaped in some measure as circumstances required, but were at last put in writing. Later still the story of the Chosen People with an account of God's creation and guidance of early man was written.

3. Historians in the schools of the prophets wrote the story of God's guidance of His Chosen People, bringing out its religious meaning as to God's purpose for the world, and enforcing spiritual lessons as to God's blessing the doer of right. They wrote history largely by quoting from earlier records of other prophetic historians or of the Kings' court-chroniclers.

4. These historical records of priests and prophets were put together and the narrative down to Moses' death was made to include the traditional laws of the nation. All this was then classed as *The Law*, divided into five books, and treated with the utmost veneration.

5. The rest of the history—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings—was classed with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Prophets—all under the title of *The Prophets*. These eight books—not till after our Lord's day allowed to be written in one volume—were, under the Scribes' influence, not regarded with the same reverence as the Law, but faithful and humble hearts found in the prophets spiritual sustenance and inspiration which prepared them better than the scribes were prepared to welcome our Lord when He came.

6. In a yet lower class were *The Sacred Writings*.

This included the Psalms—the most important and spiritual book in this division—Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah (written not from a prophet's but from a Levite's point of view), Daniel (in its present form a book of visions like St. John's Revelation), Job and Proverbs. It also contained, however, such debated works as Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

We see, then, once more, how varied and unequal are books which because all in some measure have been felt to be inspired have for convenience been bound up in one volume.

T. N.

LESSON 20

Palm Sunday

The Book of Job and the Problem of Suffering

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : Passages referred to in the notes. *Bibles* for reference.]

The Problem of Job.—The Bible, as has been said, is a collection of books, all written by men guided by the Holy Spirit to set forth some measure of religious truth, but of very various kinds—some history, some sermons, some hymns and poems, some works of imagination. There is one book—the book of *Job*—which is very near to drama, a sort of play like Mr. John Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln*, with prologue and epilogue. Job has been described, indeed, as a sort of ancient problem-play. The problem with which it deals is : How are the misfortunes of good men to be explained if God is both just and all-controlling ?

Early Answers to the Problem.—In very ancient times the fortunes, and even the character, of the individual man were not specially considered ; he was a part merely of the family or tribe to which he belonged. If he were a good man and met with suffering, it was felt that there was sin somewhere in the family, and *that* deserved the suffering which was falling on this member of the family, though himself good. Thus the sin of Achan in the time of Joshua caused disasters to fall on the Hebrew army, even though others had not done like Achan (Jos. 7).

Later, when the Jews were carried away captive to Babylon, although under Josiah they had more exactly kept to the pure service of Jehovah in the Temple than earlier generations had done, they were inclined to say that they were being punished for their fathers' sins. Ezekiel was inspired to teach that God notices the individual inside the community and that each generation is treated on its merits. *The soul that sinneth, it* (not following generations) *shall die* (Ezek. 33 10-19).

Job.—Further thought led to a desire for a still better understanding of God's methods of government. It was asked whether there were not cases where suffering, which in other cases would be called punishment, came upon men who were, so far as their consciences spoke, innocent of disobedience to God's commandments. The writer of Job was inspired to answer this problem more fully and more truly than even Ezekiel had answered it. Good men do suffer misfortune, he said ; it is a false pretence of asserting God's justice to condemn such men as secret hypocrites ;

the witness of their conscience is true that they are innocent. God's methods cannot be so tabulated and defined by man that man can dogmatise about them; there remains necessarily an element of the unknown which eludes man's definitions of religious doctrine, and it is a sin to assert that those definitions so absolutely and exactly correspond with God's Nature that we can set up to judge another man as if we could read his character as does the Eternal Judge.

Christianity.—This teaching, we know, has been enlarged and purified still further by our Lord's Life and Teaching, and by His Death and Resurrection. His Crucifixion might be interpreted by His enemies to show that He was a wicked impostor given over to death by God; but His Father vindicated his righteousness as He did Job's. Suffering, our Lord showed us, might be more than undeserved affliction borne by an innocent victim for a reason beyond man's ken; it might be a most glorious way of serving God and mankind (St. John 13 31-35). At the same time, while warning us against individually judging one another (St. Luke 6 37), He said that a man's blindness might be due to sin neither in him nor in his parents, but might be a means of glorifying God (St. John 9 3).

The Book of Job.—As we have said, the teaching of the author of Job is not given in the form of a sermon, but of a drama. First we have a prologue, or opening narrative, telling in prose who Job was, and then carrying us from earth to heaven, where we are shown how the sufferings of Job come to be ordained. It should be noticed that the writer does not think of Satan as a devil in opposition to God. He is one of the angel-ministers of God, whose special duty is to criticise men's sincerity, and, so to speak, to urge caution in accepting a man's professions as a true expression of his character. We see how, when this book was written, men's ideas of God's character were still very crude—far, indeed, from what Christians learnt in Christ (St. John 1 17, 18; Heb. 1 1, 2)—when it was thought that God would accept the service of such a jealous and suspicious spirit. We find similarly, in another place in the Old Testament, God represented as accepting service, which by the time of our Lord was regarded as the work rather of an enemy—viz. in I. Kings 22 19-23 an evil spirit to entice Ahab to his death. In II. Sam. 24 1 the writer even speaks of God as moving David to do what is spoken of as sin afterwards (verse 10). God's guidance of men towards truth appears from the fact that in I. Chron. 21 1, which was written

much later, Satan is said to have provoked David to number the people, though he repeats the story of Ahab's betrayal unchanged.

After the prologue (1, 2) which closes by bringing into view three friends of Job of the older generation who are the spokesmen of the old view as to suffering, the dialogue begins.

Job (3) deploras his misery, wishing that he had never been born. Eliphaz (4, 5) urges him not to despise God's correction, but to acknowledge the sin which must be the cause of his suffering. Job replies asserting that his conscience is clear, and in turn Bildad and Zophar repeat Eliphaz's contention, Job answering each of the three, both sides failing to confute the other, till Job (26-31), in noble language, speaks of God's greatness, of the pricelessness of wisdom guiding men in virtuous living, and of his own good conscience. He leaves the three at a dead-lock with no more to say, though they may not be convinced. Then a representative of the younger generation, Elihu, breaks in. His line of argument (32-37) against Job is that, while Job's innocence is to be accepted as a fact, Job has no right to treat God as an equal, and demand to understand the justice of his suffering. But even this younger presentation of the case is transcended by the words of Jehovah Himself (38-41). Condemning the three friends' hard judgment which would have urged Job to a false confession of sinfulness he did not feel. He brings before the sufferer His majesty and superhuman greatness, and yet He accepts the man's heart-sprung cry for God to show Himself at least as just as man can conceive justice to mean. He is willing to satisfy His servant's demand for seeing sense and justice in the government of the world up to the point that human minds can understand, but He makes Job realise afresh and more fully that man's intelligence cannot comprehend the whole of the Divine method.

God's answer does what the old view could not do. It satisfies Job's reason, and then in a brief epilogue the writer shows us the three friends at Job's intercession forgiven for their dogmatic assertions of God's honour—as they would have it—at the expense of human charity, and their denial of man's right to use his reason and his duty to listen to his conscience. Then the scene ends with Job doubly blessed in every way (42) while round him is heard the laughter of children, the bleating and lowing of flocks and herds, and the tinkling melody of camel-bells. (As a *solution* of the problem this final scene is but a mockery of what too frequently happens in real life, where the innocent, the brave, the trustful and the holy dies of a broken heart. Our Lord from

His Cross teaches us that God is greater even than a broken heart, and that the writer of Job was on the track of the true solution when he made his hero declare " Though He slay me, yet will I wait for Him " (13 15.)

T. N.

LESSON 21

Easter Day

Family Service in Church

[*Note on the Service.*—This, as the services for Christmas Day and Whit-Sunday, is intended to be one wherein the whole Sunday school, from the very youngest to the oldest, meets as one united family in the Father's House. The service, therefore, will have for its main object, worship. The spirit of worship is easily possible of being caught by the tiny children; their eyes and ears drink in the wonder of their surroundings, and they experience a sense of comradeship and strength from the presence of their elders. The joy of victory and thanksgiving should be the chief feature of the service, and hymns and prayers should be carefully selected accordingly.]

Suggested Service.—(1) Hymn; (2) Short explanation of the purpose of the service as a thanksgiving for our Lord's Resurrection, in which He has promised that all shall share who believe in Him; (3) Four prayers, each preceded by a short and simple bidding: Collect for Easter Day; prayer for the parish and schools; for the sick and suffering and those in need; for the extension of Christ's Kingdom; the Lord's Prayer; (4) Versicles, "O Lord, open Thou our lips . . ."; (5) Psalm 23; (6) Lesson (St. John 20 11-18); (7) The Creed; (8) Hymn; (9) Address; (10) Easter Anthem; (11) Hymn and Blessing. (Appropriate prayers may be found in *Prayers for Day and Sunday School*.)

Address: Subject: "Easter Victory."

What is the best day in the Christian Year?—We asked that question at Christmas, and decided that almost all boys and girls would answer, "Christmas Day." But that would not be the answer of their elders. For Christmas seems to many people to have a good deal of sadness mingled with its rejoicing. They think of the old Christmas Days, when the whole family was at home, and everything was full of happiness. But years have gone by; the family has broken up; perhaps the old home has gone; and some, too, who had a large share in making Christmas the happy day it was in past years, have died. "Christmas,"

they say, "can never be the same to us as it was when we were children." So their answer to the question is that Easter is the greatest day in the Christian Year. For Easter tells of our Lord's victory over sin and death. On Easter Day the Risen Christ proclaims His triumph: "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." And if we know that, we must be happy, even when sad memories of those who have died come into our minds; for, as St. Paul says, "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." So Easter is often called the Queen of Festivals; and if Christmas is the Festival of the Home, Easter is the Festival of the Church. "The third day He rose again according to the Scriptures."

How happy a thing it is for us that in our country Easter falls in the Spring!—"The winter is past; the flowers appear upon the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come." All this new life and beauty in the world around us corresponds to the great fact which Easter proclaims: "The Lord is risen"; "Our Saviour Christ hath abolished death." In some parts of the world Christians have to keep Easter in the autumn, when the leaves are falling, and nature is beginning to die. But our Easter always comes when the world around us is growing beautiful with new life after the dreary winter months.

Lo, the Day of days is here!
 Earth puts on her robe of cheer;
 Fields are smiling in the sun,
 Loosened streamlets seawards run,
 Tender blade and leaf appear,
 'Tis the springtide of the year;
 Day of hope and prophecy,
 Feast of immortality.

Think of some of the reasons which make Easter such a glorious day for us Christians.

1. It shows us that Jesus Christ is Divine; that He is God.

The Baby of Bethlehem grew up to become the Carpenter of Nazareth. Then, when He knew that the time was come, He left His village-home, and went out on His great mission. For three years He taught the people of the Holy Land great and wonderful truths about God and His Kingdom. "Never man spake like this man," they said. And His words were supported by His deeds of love and power; for He was always doing kind

and gracious things for the sick and the sorrowful, so that men declared, "We never saw it on this fashion." But He was persecuted by men who counted themselves religious; He was betrayed by one of His own chosen friends; He was sentenced to death by a cowardly Roman Governor; and He was crucified. When He died on the first Good Friday His enemies thought that all was over so far as He was concerned; and His friends gave up all hope. They never dreamed that they would see Him any more. But Easter morning came; the grave, where His dead body had been laid, was empty; and in the garden He showed Himself to Mary Magdalene; and then He came to His disciples and changed their sorrow into joy when they knew that He was alive again; and Thomas, who at first could not believe the glad tidings, hailed Him as "My Lord and My God." The Baby of Bethlehem, the Carpenter of Nazareth, the Crucified of Calvary, was stronger than death; and only God is stronger than death. So then, Jesus Christ, who rose again on Easter Day, is God.

2. Again Easter Day tells us that we are immortal beings. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" we sing that in the Easter Anthem. We know that we shall die, because we are human beings, and death is one of the laws of our human nature. But the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was not simply His own victory. We have our share in it. "Because I live," He said, "ye shall live also." As members of Christ we have a share in His victory. Death has lost its sting if we believe the Easter Gospel; and those whom we have loved and have "lost awhile" are living in the unseen world beyond the grave.

Jesus died for us, and rose again;
Therefore are our hopes no longer dim;
Therefore know we that to die is gain,
For we sleep in Him.

Therefore father, mother, sister, brother,
Still are ours, for all are still the Lord's;
Wherefore let us comfort one another
With these blessed words.

3. Once more Easter fills us with a sure and certain hope that goodness and truth and honour and right must triumph in the end. When Jesus died on the Cross it must have seemed to His friends that all was lost. Envy and hatred and cruelty had won the day; truth and justice were defeated. But the Resurrection told a very different story. The Risen Christ

came back with the banner of hope in His hand. Right is mightier than wrong; truth is stronger than lies; love is the conqueror; and when we range ourselves under Christ's banner we become "more than conquerors," as we work and fight for "the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

J. C. H.

LESSON 22

First Sunday after Easter

Church Life in the First Century compared with
Church Life to-day

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : Passages referred to in the notes. An endeavour should be made to create, as the notes are read, a vivid mental picture of the daily life and worship of the members of the Early Church, with a clear appreciation of their great difficulties and of their wonderful missionary zeal. This lesson is introductory to those which follow on the New Testament and gives something of the necessary background for them. The class should have Bibles and refer to them during the instruction.]

This and eight of the following lessons form a short course continuing the New Testament study of the two former years the notes of which should be consulted. The teacher is warned not to be ensnared into the attitude towards such lessons: I was never taught these Epistles or the Revelation and I know little about them; therefore I shall not trouble to teach them. That way lies a continued deplorable ignorance of Christians concerning their Bibles and the Church.

1. **The Church in Making.**—No one in trying to form a mental picture of the Church in the days of the apostles expects to find it exactly like the Church of to-day. For one thing it was all a missionary Church. There was no ready-made, hard and fast system to be planted down on a foreign soil. Its organisation and formulæ had to be gradually worked out as circumstances demanded. Each problem had to be solved under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as it arose. The churches grew up more or less independently of each other. Means of communication were difficult. There was at first no centralised organisation. There was not even a New Testament to fix the rule of faith. The wonder from a human point of view is that a united Church should

ever have arisen from such haphazard beginnings. Indeed no merely human society could have survived with so little deliberate planning. The secret of the Church's growth and establishment was its "enthusiasm" in the literal meaning of the word, i.e. "God-inspired zeal." All Christians were consumed by the one desire to live the life of Christ in the world. And this common will to be Christ's men made it possible for the Holy Spirit to lead them to united thought and action. Not that there was not much variety of type among Christians in the first days. In particular Jewish and Gentile Christians were predisposed to develop the Church's life on very different lines. The Jews were inclined to mould it upon the organisation of the synagogue. The Gentiles on the other hand turned for their models more to the guilds and clubs which played so large a part in Greek social life. And the result was a richness and adaptability which could never have sprung from only one source. From the synagogue, for instance, the Church learnt to value such things as a fixed local ministry and frequent reading of Scripture. On the other hand Greek customs helped it in organising its social activities.

2. The Church at Worship.—There was no "going to church" in those days, for no Christian churches yet existed. Nor did Christians (as is sometimes stated) as a rule worship in the Catacombs or in the open air. Their meetings took place in private houses. St. Paul mentions several persons whose houses were habitually used for the purpose (see Rom. 16 5; I. Cor. 16 19; Col. 4 15; Philem. 2). A second great difference was that there was no general observance of Sunday in the modern sense. It was not a holiday. Christians could not cease work on it. Those who were Jews at first tried to retain the habit of keeping the Sabbath Day (Saturday). But Gentile Christians never followed their example. By the second century, however, the Lord's Day (Sunday) had come to be universally marked by special services. Early in the morning, before the day's work began, or in the evening, when it was finished, the Christians met for worship. (Compare the way in which most people have to keep Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day, and Saints' Days to-day.) Their Services were much freer and more elastic than ours. The meetings were composed of three parts.

(a) First came *the Agape or Love Feast*, i.e. a common meal of which all the Christians partook, reclining on couches round low tables. The provisions were contributed by the members themselves, each bringing what he could. The Bishop or Presbyter

presided and offered prayers before the meal. Here are two of the earliest which have come down to us. "We give Thee thanks, O our Father, for the holy vine of Thy Son David, which Thou madest known unto us through Thy Son Jesus; Thine is the glory for ever and ever." "As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever and ever." In I. Cor. 11 21-22, 33-34, we read of abuses which had spoilt the spirit of this common meal at Corinth: greediness, selfishness, and drunkenness. But this must not make us think that in most cases it was not a really helpful institution, which enabled the rich members of the Church to provide for the poor and all to feel their unity and brotherhood. After the common meal there probably followed a Service of Preparation for the Communion, called later "The Litany of the Catechumens," i.e. those who, because they were not yet baptised, were not allowed to remain for the Eucharist. It corresponded to our Ante-Communion Service, and consisted of readings from the Old Testament, instructions from the presiding minister, communications from apostles (cf. Col. 4 16) and possibly the reciting or singing of Psalms.

(b) The *Eucharist* followed. From the bread and wine which the people had brought, a portion had been set aside for the Sacrament of Christ's love. Over these the Bishop offered an extemporary thanksgiving (Consecration Prayer), to which the people responded, Amen (I. Cor. 14 16). If we may judge by the earliest picture which has survived, the Bishop remained seated for the Breaking of the Bread, possibly in imitation of Christ's own attitude at the Last Supper. The Administration of the Elements was undertaken by the Deacons. Possibly there were additional extemporary prayers, including intercessions (Prayer for the Church Militant) and the responses, "Lift up your hearts, etc." (*Sursum corda.*)

(c) The "*Liturgy of the Holy Spirit.*" There followed the spiritual exercises referred to in I. Cor. 14, in which any member of the congregation might take part. They can best be described by a quotation from the historian Duchesne: "These held a very large place in the Christian service as it is represented to us by the most ancient documents. After the Eucharist inspired persons begin to speak, and to manifest before the assembly the presence of the Spirit that animates them. Prophets,

ecstasies, the speakers with tongues, the interpreters, the faith-healers, now take up the attention of the faithful. There is, as it were, a liturgy of the Holy Spirit after the liturgy of Christ, a real liturgy, with real presence and communion. The inspiration can be felt; it thrills the organs of some privileged persons; but the whole congregation is moved, edified, and even ravished to a greater or less extent."

(For a short account of the worship of the early Church see Dr. Dearmer's "The Church at Prayer" pp. 61-72.)

3. The Church's Philanthropy.—To be a member of the Church in those days meant to belong to a very efficient Friendly Society. St. Paul's principle that if "one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it" (I. Cor. 12 26) had been thoroughly absorbed. And the duty of almsgiving, which it had inherited from the Jews, (Heb. 13 16; I. Tim. 6 17) gave the Church a fund from which to make provision for its poorer members (cf. Acts 4 34-35). This fund was under the control of the Bishop, which explains the stress laid in I. Tim. 3 3 on his having to be a man who could be trusted to handle money honestly. Those who were unable to support themselves through poverty (I. John 3 17) or because they were widows (I. Tim. 5 16) or for any other reason (Jas. 2 15-16) were maintained by the Church. Specially in times of persecution it looked after those in prison (Heb. 10 34). Travellers who carried a letter of commendation from their Church could expect to be entertained by the Christians, wherever they stayed (Rom. 12 13; I. Peter 4 9; Heb. 6 10; 13 2; III. John 6, 7). And, just as individual Christians in distress could appeal to their Church for help, so Churches relieved each others' necessities (Acts 11 29; Rom. 15 26-27). "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6 2) was a precept which was literally carried out.

(Students will find a full account of the Church's philanthropy in Harnack's *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity* I. 147-198.)

4. The Church's Discipline.—There was no doubt in the early days who was a member of the Church, and who was not. There was no one who corresponded to the father of the boy in *Punch*, who, when asked what his father was, replied, "He's a Christian: But he ain't doing much at it just at present." All baptised Christians were communicants and took part in the full life of the Church. And, if any member behaved unworthily, he was warned, and every effort was made to bring him to repentance

(cf. James 5 19-20 ; I. John 5 16). But if he remained unrepentant he was expelled altogether from membership (St. Matthew 18 17). Examples of such excommunication, i.e. being deprived of the right of communion, will be found in I. Cor. 5 4-7 ; I. Tim. 1 20 and III. John 9, 10.

R. W. B.

LESSON 23

Second Sunday after Easter

The First Epistle of St. Peter

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : Passages referred to in the notes.

It will be very necessary for the teacher, in preparing this and the following lessons, to think himself back into the family of Christians for whom the epistles were intended. Those were times of great and searching hardship, when the saints were being degraded, persecuted, and killed because they confessed Christ their Lord. The letters were written, then, to our Christian brethren of those early days, communities of men, women, and children, whose love for their Master was tested as that of very few of us to-day ; and their material and spiritual environment should therefore be made living and real to illuminate the message of the epistles as we read them.

Bibles should be used and the epistle carefully followed throughout by the class.]

1. The Origin of the Epistle.—The letter was written by St. Peter somewhere between the years 64 and 66 A.D. He writes from Rome, which he calls by its code-name "Babylon" (5 13). It was not always safe for Christians to speak too plainly in their correspondence, and so they had several well-understood devices for hiding their meanings. (See Higher Middle Course ; Third Year, Lesson 34). One of these was to speak always of Rome as "Babylon." The letter is addressed to the Christians living in the provinces of Asia Minor (1 1). A glance at the map will show how St. Paul's messenger, Silvanus (5 12), was to make a circular journey, starting from the Black Sea, passing southwards and eastwards to Cappadocia, then turning westwards through the province of Asia and ending up in Bithynia, near to where he started from. In this way he would be able to deliver copies of the Apostle's letter of encouragement at important centres, from which it would soon circulate among the surrounding Churches. And they were all in great need of encouragement. Serious persecutions had assailed them (1 6). They were

unpopular, and falsely accused (2 12). It was a "fiery trial" which threatened them (4 12). They were liable to be arrested simply "for the name of Christ," i.e. because they were Christians (4 14). It was to uphold their faith and steadfastness under such severe testing that St. Peter wrote this letter. It is included in the section of the New Testament which is headed "*General Epistles*" because, unlike St. Paul's epistles, it is not addressed to any single Church or individual.

2. Life as a Pilgrimage.—Every set of peculiar circumstances in which a Christian finds himself drives him to dwell upon some particular aspect of God's revelation in Christ. In times of persecution men's thoughts are driven towards a longing for the other world. When life is filled with little but suffering and hardship it ceases to seem worth living. It becomes simply a necessary evil to be endured for the sake of what lies beyond. In such circumstances Christians picture themselves as pilgrims passing through a difficult and dangerous country with their eyes fixed on a promised land ahead. That is the image under which St. Peter pictures life. He appeals to his readers on the ground that they are only "sojourners and pilgrims" (2 11). They are heirs to a glorious inheritance, "incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 4). They as Christians belong to a wonderful new fellowship, which God has brought into relation with Himself. This fellowship is described under various metaphors, "a spiritual house" (2 5); "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (2 9). In all these what is dwelt upon is the glorious privilege which membership of the Christian Church confers. It bestows "a living hope" which outweighs all present disadvantages (1 67). Christians have been ransomed from slavery by the shedding of Christ's blood (1 19, 2 24); and in sharing His sufferings they ensure that they shall be partakers of His glory (4 13, 14; 5 10).

3. The Pilgrim's Behaviour.—But, though we regard our time in this world simply as a short pilgrimage, that does not mean that we shall be careless as to how we behave ourselves. The greater part of the epistle is taken up with exhortations to make Christian conduct correspond to the high calling which God has granted to us. "Like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living" (1 15). Christians must abstain from every appearance of evil (2 1). They must be on their guard constantly against the temptations of the devil

(5 8). They should be careful to exhibit genuine love towards each other (1 22). They must be most scrupulous in performing every duty which their circumstances lay upon them. Slaves must obey their masters (2 18). Citizens must serve the state (2 13ff). Wives and husbands must be considerate and true to each other (3 1-7).

In giving these injunctions St. Peter has two sets of people in mind.

(1) There were in his day, as in ours, some Christians who were inclined to be lax in their moral standard. They argued that, since the world was very soon to pass away, it did not matter much how you lived. Since Christ washed away all sins, a few more or less did not matter. They wanted the glories of the world to come. But they forgot that the Celestial City can only be reached after a long and arduous pilgrimage, in which self-discipline must play a large part. They could never have understood the conception of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is against such careless and disloyal Christians that St. Peter urges the strenuousness and seriousness of the Christian life. Read specially 4 1-10.

(2) And at the same time he is conscious that the eyes of the heathen world are always watching the Church, and that Christians in the long run will always be judged by their conduct, not by their doctrines. It is true that the Christians of St. Peter's day had a bad name. They were dubbed kill-joys (2 12, 4 4). This was because they felt bound to keep aloof from much of the social life of the world, feasts, public holidays, etc., on account of their intimate connection with idolatry. But St. Peter is confident that the noble bearing of the Christians in their every day behaviour must at last win the approbation of the world. If a Christian can justly be accused of evil living (4 15) he does injury, not merely to himself, but to the very name of Christ. But if his behaviour is consistently "seemly among the Gentiles," they will some day be won to glorify God through the good actions which they see the servants of God performing.

4. The Christian Attitude to Trouble.—This epistle is the most helpful book in the Bible for anyone to study who has to endure suffering of any kind. It is strange that people so often mistake resignation for the true Christian attitude to troubles. Resignation, even when it reaches such noble heights as in the Book of Job, is something which brings very little real comfort. Simply to say, "It was God's will," does not really take away the pain.

And it is often one of the hardest possible tasks to bring ourselves to say and believe it. St. Peter teaches us a far more beautiful state of mind to aim at when the storms of life pass over us. First he bids us get altogether out of our heads that a smooth and untroubled life is the most desirable. It was not the kind of life which Christ went through. When we share His experience and endure suffering patiently and cheerfully, we are literally following in His steps. Read 2 20-24 and 4 12-14. We must remember that the aim of the Christian life is not that we may be freed from external evil, but that we may draw near to Christ in our hearts (3 15). And in the second place St. Peter teaches us to dwell upon the thought that no persecuting power can ever go a single step beyond what God allows (3 13, 5 6-7). Along that line lies the true Christian submission—not simply to say, “I must bear it because God wills it,” but to cast away all anxiety, because we are sure that the Father of Love is overruling all. He may not smooth away every rough place which lies across our pilgrim’s path. But the end of His purpose for us is unquestionable—“eternal glory in Christ.”

R. W. B.

LESSON 24

Third Sunday after Easter

The First Epistle of St. John

[*For the teacher’s reading and study* : Passages referred to in the notes.

See note preliminary to the preceding lesson. Any temptation to omit such lessons as these should be stoutly resisted. The ignorance of most Christians about their Bible is deplorable, and the present state of things has arisen largely because those who have been called to the task of giving instruction have omitted so much that a little careful thought would have allowed them to use, to the eternal welfare of those whom they instruct.

Bibles should be used and the epistle carefully followed throughout by the class.]

1. Life’s Contrasts.—Life is made up of innumerable acts of individual choice. There is always a better and a worse course which can be taken. We can follow the path of good or of evil.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side :
Some great cause, God’s new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight
And the choice goes by for ever ’twixt that darkness and that light.

—Lowell.

Christ’s illustration of the broad road and the wide gate leading

to destruction and the narrow way with its gate leading unto life eternal which needs application to find, is always true. St. John had learnt the lesson well. In his view all problems unfold themselves in terms of broad contrasts: walking in light or darkness (1 6-7); love and hate (2 10-11); Christ or Antichrist (2 22-23); children of God or children of the devil (3 10); love of God and love of the world (2 15); confidence and fear (4 17-18). The Christian life to St. John is not simply drifting along with the crowd. It is a very definite renunciation of all that is contrary to God's will. Christ demands no easy-going tolerance of sin, no careless saying that it will not count this time, but an entire cleansing from all that is sinful (3 8-9).

2. Fellowship with God.—The Christian can of course never be true to this high conception of loyalty to the right, unless he has first attained to fellowship with God. And St. John tells us that his purpose in writing his epistle was to enable us to have this fellowship with God (1 3). We have a natural, physical life which we share with all living creatures. But it is possible for us to be "living" in an animal sense, but in a higher sense to be "dead." Our souls are made to hold communion with God; and without fellowship with God there can be no real life in the highest part of our nature. The purpose of St. John's epistle, just as it was of his Gospel (see St. John 20 31) is to explain how this spiritual life can be realised. Christ came to bring the life of God within the reach of men—something which could be heard, seen and handled (1 1). The apostles were the first people to be brought into contact with this life which is in Christ. So, by sharing in the apostles' experience, all Christians can obtain fellowship with the Church; and so fellowship with Christ; and so fellowship with God (1 2-3, 7).

This is the thought which lies behind all the various metaphors which St. John uses to illustrate the relationship of the Christian towards God. The following should be studied: We are "children of God" (3 1) or "begotten of God" (3 9, 5 4). We "abide in God" (4 15) and the "word of God abideth in us" (2 14, 3 6). We "know God" (2 13, 4 6). We "do His will" (3 21). God hears us (4 6) and we go with complete confidence to Him in prayer (5 15). All this implies a perfect harmony of thought and will and affection between ourselves and God.

But we have to remember that this is not a natural state, but something which only comes to us by the work of Christ for us and in us.

God by nature is **Light**. We on the other hand are prone to walk in darkness and to love what is not true (1 6). But Christ came to reveal all truth (2 27, 4 1-6). If then we abide in Christ's teaching we shall have the light of God illuminating our hearts.

Again God is essentially **Righteous**. No one who is unrighteous can be a true child of God (3 4-7). We could therefore never have fellowship with God, unless the blood of Christ had cleansed us from all sin (1 7). Christ has destroyed the works of the devil (3 8). He has given us the means of getting rid of our sins in the sight of God (2 1-2). He gives us power to keep clear of sin altogether (3 7-9). So our fellowship can become at last a likeness of character with God's (3 2-3).

3. Fellowship with Men.—But the greatest contrast between our nature and God's nature is that "God is *Love*," and we find it so hard to love one another completely. Yet the absence of brotherly love would make it impossible for us to love God truly (4 20). Love of God and love of our fellow men are so inextricably bound up together that the one cannot exist to any high degree without the other (4 8, 5 1-2). And both can only be attained when we have a sense of the enormous love which God has shown to us in Christ. "We love, because He first loved us." Study carefully 4 9-12. When the love of God for us is realised, all that sins against love is cast out of our hearts, e.g. hatred which, as our Lord taught, breaks the Sixth Commandment (3 15 cf. St. Matthew 5 21-22); meanness (3 17); bitterness, which is jealous of anyone who is better than ourselves (3 11-12). Thus to love is to have the true signs of life. To be unloving is to show that we have not yet become sharers of the life which is in Christ.

R. W. B.

LESSON 25

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

The Epistle to the Hebrews : (1) Its Origin and Purpose

[*For the teacher's reading and study*: Passages referred to in the notes.

The most helpful commentaries to use are those of Professor A. B. Davidson in *Handbooks for Bible Classes*, and Professor A. S. Peake in the *Century Bible*. More advanced students should read Bruce's article on the epistle in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

It should be remembered that, as a great commentator has said, 'For this writer there are no Gentiles,' i.e. when writing his epistle he thought of Jewish converts to Christ; all others were blotted from his mind. As the following notes show, therefore, the teacher will have to think hard as to what it would have been like to have lived in a community of people reared as Jews but later living as persecuted followers of Christ in those early days of the Church.]

1. The Author.—In our Bibles, both A.V. and R.V., the epistle is headed "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." But this title does not belong to the original document. In the earliest manuscripts the title is simply "To the Hebrews." The addition of St. Paul's name was not made generally till about the ninth century; and there is no doubt that the epistle circulated in the early Church is an anonymous document. Only gradually and with considerable hesitation did the Fathers attribute its authorship to St. Paul, and then almost solely because the influential Church of Alexandria maintained that he wrote it. Modern scholars are almost unanimous in deciding that it was not written by St. Paul. Like many other books of the Bible we can only guess at its author from its contents and the allusions which he makes to himself are very few. He was not an original disciple of our Lord, but had received the gospel from ear-witnesses (2 3). He was a member of the community to which he was writing and hoped to rejoin them soon after a temporary separation (13 18-19). Timothy had been his colleague (13 23). This is all that he tells us about himself. (N.B. The reference to "me in my bonds" in A.V. of 10 34 is based on a false reading. R.V. corrects it to "them that were in bonds.")

From this meagre material it is possible to make almost any guess we like at the author's name. Barnabas, Luke, Silas, Apollos and Clement (Bishop of Rome about 95 A.D.) have all been suggested. The most interesting conjecture is that the

epistle may have been written by Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, St. Paul's fellow-workers (Acts 18 2-3; Rom. 16 3; I. Cor. 16 19). This theory has as much probability as any other. If it is correct, it gives a woman a place in the company of our New Testament writers.

2. The Readers.—The early scribes who headed the epistle in their copies, "To the Hebrews," were quite right in their description of the people to whom it was addressed. They were Jewish Christians, probably those who still spoke Aramaic, the language of Palestine, and used the original Hebrew Old Testament, not the Septuagint, its Greek translation, which most Christians used. They had received the gospel from ear-witnesses (2 3). Their conversion cannot have been very recent, because their first teachers had already died (13 7); and moreover the writer evidently thinks that they have had time to reach a far more advanced stage of Christian development than they show (5 12). At some earlier time they had suffered a severe persecution (10 32); and they were threatened with even greater troubles in the immediate future (12 11-13). They appear to have been a fairly small body, situated in a single place. That is to say, the letter was not addressed to Hebrew Christians in general all over the world as a circular letter like I. Peter. It is more likely that it was first addressed to a small congregation of Jewish Christians living in one city, e.g. Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome or Antioch. All these places have been suggested. Perhaps the last two are the most probable. The passages which throw most light on the circumstances of the original readers, besides those already quoted are: 10 25, 13 17, 18, 24.

3. A Word of Exhortation.—The writer's purpose in sending this epistle is twofold. First he wants to save his readers from the dire peril of apostasy. He calls his letter "a word of exhortation"; and over and over again he breaks off his argument to urge them to remain true to Christ (e.g. 2 1-4, 4 1-2, 6 9-12). The fears which he expresses on their behalf are evidently connected with the trials which are coming upon them. He wishes to see them imitating the "cloud of witnesses" who had already endured reproach for the name of Christ (12 1-2, 13 13). They must not follow the evil example of the Israelites who, when hard days came upon them, fell away from God (3 8-13). What exactly was the nature and cause of their trials is not quite clear, specially because the writer's tone suggests

that it was not simply cowardice which made them likely to relapse. Their faith was in some way undermined. Some suppose that they were disturbed by the recent destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, and the disappearance of the whole sacrificial system of the Jewish religion. But, however that may be, there is no doubt as to what he believes to be the best antidote to a wavering state of mind. They must be men of faith, i.e. those who, like Moses, endure "as seeing Him who is invisible" (11 27). Faith makes the unseen and the eternal more real to us than the things which are material and temporal (11 1); therefore those who live always in the presence of God are quite undisturbed by conflicts with the world or by onslaughts on their creed. As Mr. Arnold Bennett has said, "All martyrs are happy, because their conduct and their principles agree. What leads to the permanent sorrowfulness of burglars is that their principles are contrary to burglary. If they believed in the moral excellency of burglary, penal servitude would simply mean so many happy years to them."

4. Misconceptions about Christ Dispelled.—The Hebrews' difficulties were intellectual quite as much as they were moral. The writer is aware that they would not have been so liable to give way under persecution, if they had not got into their heads entirely wrong notions of what Christianity taught. Like so many people at the present day, they had first hopelessly misrepresented Christian teaching, and then complained that it was hard to understand and did not answer their needs (5 11-6 2). Their fundamental mistake was that they did not really accept Christ as the supreme and final revelation of God to man. Instead of making Christ the standard by which everything was to be judged, they had preconceived ideas of what must be the truth and tried to fit Christ into them. These ideas were derived from their upbringing as Jews, and the writer is at great pains to take each source from which Jews had been accustomed to think that they could discover God's will and to show how far superior Christ is to each.

(a) 1 1-3. The prophets of the Old Testament could only reveal God partially and spasmodically. Christ makes us aware of God as completely as the sun's rays convey its heat and light ("the effulgence of His glory") or a wax impression reproduces the device upon a seal ("the impress of His substance": R.V. Marg.).

(b) 1 4-14. According to Jewish ideas, every revelation of

God to man had been made through the agency of angels (cf. Gal. 3 19). But Christ is far superior to the angels.

(c) 3 1-16. Moses the Lawgiver was the most revered name to Jewish ears. To criticise Moses was to criticise religion itself (cf. Acts 6 11). The first question which a Jew would ask about Christ was whether His teaching conformed to that of Moses. Yet, as Hebrews shows, that is to argue the wrong way round; it is like trying to investigate a son's legitimacy, not from his likeness to his father, but by his likeness to a servant of the household (see 3 5-6: cf. St. John 6 32).

(d) 8 1-9 23. The priests of Aaron's line and the sacrifices which they offered were the Jews' means of approaching God. But a new and better way has been provided in Christ (see specially 8 13, 9 11, 12, 23).

All this is to our mind rather a roundabout way of proving the eternal supremacy of Christ. But so long as the Hebrews were clinging to these other authorities and putting them in a higher place than Christ, the writer had to take each in turn and show its inferiority.

R. W. B.

LESSON 26

Fifth Sunday after Easter

The Epistle to the Hebrews: (2) Christ our High Priest

1. Things hard of Interpretation (5 11).—Most people find parts of the Epistle to the Hebrews very difficult to understand. This is specially true of all the passages which speak of Christ as our High Priest, and describe His work by comparisons drawn from the Old Testament sacrificial system. This must necessarily be the case; because, when we try to interpret Christ in terms of sacrifice, we are trying to explain the known by means of the unknown. The Hebrews knew the Temple sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood from first hand knowledge. When they read such phrases as, "Every High Priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices" (8 3) or "Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (9 22) they at once grasped the principles which were appealed to. If the writer wanted to explain what Christ was like to them, he could not find a better line of comparison than this, which they all understood. But

with us it is different. We have never seen an animal offered in sacrifice. The significance of the pouring out of the blood of the victim and all the other ritual actions of the priest are quite foreign to us. We have very hazy notions as to the difference between a burnt-offering and a peace-offering. Before, therefore, we can begin to compare Christ to a priest of the old world we are obliged to go to school and acquire a lot of antiquarian knowledge. It is rather as though, in order to understand the arrangement of our Church (e.g. the position of the altar at the east end and the font near the door), we were told that we must first learn all about the structure of a Greek temple. We should reply, "I know my Church. Why can't you explain it to me in terms which I already understand?" The same may be said of Christ. We know Him far better than we know the Temple; and we can quite well understand all the truth which the writer of the Hebrews teaches under the metaphor of the High Priest, without following him into the details of all his arguments derived from practices which are quite unknown to us.

2. A Metaphor not to be Pressed too far.—Besides the confusion of mind into which many peoples work themselves when they try to apply all the particulars of the Old Testament priesthood to Christ, there are two other reasons why we should not press the title "our High Priest" too far. First we have to remember that Hebrews is the only book of the New Testament which uses the title. Christ spoke of Himself as a Shepherd, a Teacher and a Leader. He thought of Himself in relation to the rabbis and to the civil rulers of His day. But he never seems to have thought of comparing Himself to the priests of the Temple. Nor do any of the other New Testament writers use the comparison. It is only this author who employs it; and that for a special reason. He is writing to a small circle whose minds have been steeped in the idea that there is no approach to God possible except through their priests and sacrifices. Therefore he must assert, "If you need a High Priest, then you can find none greater than Christ."

And secondly, our author is quite aware that the comparison is one which would be false, if it were overstrained. He is quite as much at pains to show how *unlike* (better, it is true; but still unlike) Christ is to the priests whom the Jews knew as to call attention to His *likeness* (cf. 7 23-24, 9 11-14, 23-28). In two respects in particular the comparison breaks down.

(a) Priests, however competent to bring the worshipper near

to God, remained essentially human. Christ's merit was not merely that He led His brethren up to God, but that in Him God Himself had come to earth to save men.

(b) Behind every priesthood of antiquity there was the idea that God was an angry and offended God, whose mind towards the worshippers had to be changed by the action of the priest on their behalf into favour and mercy. We involve ourselves in terrible mistakes if we ever think of Christ's office as High Priest to be that of turning God's anger into love. We must hold fast to St. Paul's teaching that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." God has never changed. It was the world which needed to be changed in order that it might become "at one" with God.

3. Christ the Mediator between God and Man.—Leaving aside, then, the Old Testament metaphors under which the writer tries to make the Hebrews grasp his meaning, let us ask what is the truth about Christ which he is trying to teach. It is a very wonderful one and of permanent value. Christ through His coming to earth, His life, His death, His ascension, has become the perfect mediator between God and man. Sin sets up an estrangement between us and God. Just as sometimes a clash of interests arise between nations, so that "diplomatic relations" are broken off; or as in industrial disputes negotiations break down, till someone steps in to bring the two sides together again; so there can be no free fellowship with God, so long as sin stands in the way. It was to get rid of this barrier of sin that the older priesthoods set their hands. The priests were supposed to be in a position to know the will of God and so to teach men how they might avoid sinning against God. And, because the people were unworthy to come into the presence of God, the priest acted as their substitute in presenting their gifts and sacrifices before God. But in both respects they failed to bridge the gulf. They themselves were erring men, and therefore incapable of interpreting God truly to men (9 7). And none of their sacrifices had any real power to remove man's sinfulness (10 11). But Christ can adequately fulfil both the functions in which the old priesthoods failed. He is perfect God, and can therefore reveal God's mind completely. This is the meaning of "a faithful High Priest," i.e. not one self-appointed, but God-given (5 4-5). He is also perfect Man, "in all things made like unto His brethren." (2 17). Hence He is able to be our representative before God. Because of His self-oblation and obedience He is able to bring us

before the throne of grace (4 14-16, 5 7-9). Hence in Christ we see, not a development of the Old Testament priesthood, but something greater, which removes the necessity for priest and sacrifice (7 11, 18-19, 9 11-15). From Him we learn fully God's nature and will. Through Him we pass into the presence of God with complete confidence and freedom (4 16, 10 19-22, 12 18-23, 13 15).

4. Our High Priest's Work.—The epistle teaches us three gracious offices which the ascended and glorified Christ is now performing on our behalf.

(a) *He is our Representative before God*, who has passed into the Presence before us (6 20) and is the "author" of our salvation (5 9). Our prayers and praises are therefore in a literal sense offered "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (4 14-5 1, 13 15).

(b) *He is our Intercessor*. Because He has taken us for His brethren, He adds something to our prayers. His merit, not our own feeble efforts, makes our prayers effective (7 25).

(c) *He pleads His own Sacrifice on our Behalf* (7 26-27, 9 23-26, 10 10, 12 24). That sacrifice was complete, and can never be repeated. But we think of it, not simply as something which took place long ago, but as something which remains eternally effective to-day. Therefore in our Communion we can sing,

One offering, single and complete,
With lips and heart we say ;
But what He never can repeat
He shows forth day by day.

R. W. B.

LESSON 27

Sunday after Ascension Day

The Epistle to the Hebrews : (3) **Two Characteristic Passages**

1. The Humiliation of Christ (2 5-18).—We have already seen that the writer of Hebrews puts Christ in the highest conceivable place in men's thoughts. He believes that He is "the Son of God" in the fullest and most absolute sense, and that He came down from heaven to reveal God to us (1 1-2). His incarnate life was not the beginning of His existence; but by a great

act of condescension He assumed human nature for our sakes (2 9, 14, 5 7). But His "being made lower than the angels" and His "tasting death" would raise an almost insuperable difficulty in the minds of Jewish readers. They could not conceive it possible for Christ to undergo humiliation and death. In particular the shameful death of the cross always presented "unto Jews a stumbling block." They might have accepted a Messiah who was glorious and finally triumphant; but they could not see that the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus could be anything but a proof of His failure.

The same difficulty exists for us in another form. If Jesus was truly God, how could He possibly endure agony and weakness such as the gospels record? Was not Satan right in his logic, when he argued, "If you are the Son of God, then God's angels must intervene to keep you from harm"? There are three ways of looking at this question.

(a) We can say that glory and humiliation are incompatible ideas. If a person suffers, it is something degrading; it robs him of all claim to honour. If a person is to be really magnificent, he must never meet with disaster or affront. If so, then Jesus' sufferings prove that He was *not* God. This is something like the position which the first readers of Hebrews were inclined to take up. They thought that pain and failure were things which must be explained away. The Son to their mind could never appear glorious, so long as His sufferings had to be accepted.

(b) Or we can say that the humiliation of Jesus was a temporary veiling of the Son's glory; that suffering and death are in fact inconsistent with His divine nature; but that nature had been laid aside for the time being in order that He might be able to die for us. That is very much the way in which a great many Christians at the present day look upon the problem. They think of Christ's weakness and reproach as inevitable, but none the less regrettable, incidents of his Incarnation. They brought to Him sad and shameful experiences. But there was nothing glorious in them. They are only compensated for by the fact that He quickly resumed His glory again by His Resurrection and Ascension. When people think like this, it is not to be wondered at that they often come to make the human life of Christ bear a very unreal appearance. He seems to be a Divine Being acting under the thin disguise of a man rather than One who had "emptied Himself" of His divine glory. And if Christ, so to speak, only endured suffering by ceasing to be God,

how difficult we shall find it to discover any clue to the purpose of our sufferings !

(c) The author of Hebrews has a far bolder and more helpful way of regarding Christ's sufferings. He does not try to minimize them in the least. He rather emphasises the human experiences of Jesus. He was "in all things tempted like as we are" (4 15). He was "in all things made like unto His brethren" (2 17). "In the days of His flesh" He shrank from death "with strong crying and tears" (5 7). He "endured the cross, despising the shame" (12 2). He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (5 8). But so far from finding anything in these experiences which detracted from the Son's dignity, he holds that the humiliations were in themselves glorious; Christ was perfect, not because He escaped suffering, but through His sufferings (2 10). His assumption of complete humanity (with all its weaknesses and limitations) was something entirely fitting (2 17). His power to help mankind in their trials could never have been won except through a real undergoing of painful trial Himself (2 18; N.B. "in that" = "because"). Hence he can use one of the most startling statements about Christ in the whole New Testament; "because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour" (2 9). That is, the Son of God became more glorious and wonderful, when He suffered, than He would have been if He had never been made "lower than the angels."

It is along this line of thought that we can reach a partial solution of the problem of our sufferings. In theory we are puzzled, when undeserved suffering comes to us. But in practice we find that it makes us also more glorious, because it gives us the opportunity to exhibit in our lives noble qualities, such as patience, self-sacrifice and courage, which would otherwise never have come to the surface.

2. The High Priesthood of Melchizedek (5 6-10, 7 1-25).—These passages are a puzzle to all but the original readers of Hebrews. Briefly the writer's argument is this. You Jews believe that God has eternally purposed that a priesthood should be the channel of communication between God and man; and that the Levitical order is the only legitimate priesthood. If Jesus were a true priest, He must have been born of the tribe of Levi, not of Judah (7 14). But my reply is twofold. First I can show that the Levitical system has failed altogether to provide a satisfactory mediation between God and man (see last Lesson).

Secondly there is an older and independent priesthood spoken of in the Old Testament ; and one of the Psalms distinctly prophesied that the Messiah was to belong to the order of Melchizedek and not of Levi (5 6). The writer therefore works out in considerable detail the analogy between Christ and Melchizedek. Much of his argument seems to us rather far-fetched, e.g. when he says that because Levi was Abraham's great-grandson and Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek and received his blessing, therefore Christ, Melchizedek's successor, must be greater than the Temple priests, who derive their authority from Levi (7 4-10). But what he is really thinking about is something much truer than his arguments. He pictures Christ as the ideally perfect priest. Being sure that Christ must fulfil all the conditions which can be demanded of a priest, he proceeds, by a most unnatural interpretation of Gen. 14 18-20, to discover that they are all present in His ante-type.

(a) Christ was perfectly *Holy*. So must Melchizedek have been, because his name means " King of *Righteousness*."

(b) Christ was endowed with *Authority*. So was Melchizedek, because he was a *King*.

(c) Christ's office was to bring about *Reconciliation* between God and man. Melchizedek had the same function, because he was King of *Salem*, which means *Peace*.

(d) Christ's authority was *Personal*, not derived. Melchizedek's authority must have been of the same character, for he was " without father, without mother, without descent." This is a very curious piece of interpretation. Of course Genesis never suggests anything of the kind. It merely does not happen to mention Melchizedek's parentage.

(e) Christ is *Eternal*. He has no need of successors to take up His work, when He lays it down. Melchizedek is like Him, because he had " neither beginning of days, nor end of life"—actually Genesis does not happen to record his death.

This passage is typical of the way in which our writer reaches permanent and true conclusions, though the strange and round-about Jewish lines of thought by which he reaches them, are something which we reject altogether.

R. W. B.

LESSON 28

Whit-Sunday

Family Service in Church

[*Note on the Service.*—This service, as those for Christmas Day and Easter Day, is intended to be one wherein all grades of the Sunday school join in united worship as a family in the Father's House. Although tiny children often appear not to enter into such a service, yet they may, in fact, take a far more real share than is accredited to them. To be with so many of the older scholars in church, with its festival decorations and the beauty of its architecture and adornment, hearing praises and kneeling in prayer, all minister through the senses far more than we might suppose to the young child's wonder, and awe, and reverence, and worship.]

Suggested Service.—(1) Hymn ; (2) Short explanation of the service as the celebration of the Festival of God the Holy Spirit ; (3) Three or four Prayers, each preceded by a simple bidding : Collect for Whit-Sunday ; or another simpler prayer for the blessing and guidance of God the Holy Spirit ; for our homes, that God the Holy Spirit may dwell in them ; for the sick and suffering and all others who need the comfort of the Holy Spirit ; for the coming of God's Kingdom in the power of the Holy Spirit throughout the world ; the Lord's Prayer ; (4) Versicles, " O Lord, open Thou our lips . . ." ; (5) Hymn ; (6) Lesson (Acts 2 1-4) ; (7) The Creed ; (8) Hymn ; (9) Address ; (10) Hymn (" Our blest Redeemer ") ; (11) Blessing. (Appropriate prayers may be found in *Prayers for Day and Sunday School*.)

Address : Subject : " The Power of the Spirit."

The Church's Birthday.—Next after Christmas and Easter amongst the great Festivals of the Christian Year we should all place Whit-Sunday, which is very often called the Church's Birthday ; for it was when the disciples had received " power from on high " by " the coming of the Holy Ghost " that the life of the Church of Jesus Christ began.

But Whit-Sunday does not appeal to us with the same force as do Christmas and Easter. Everyone must be conscious of the appeal which the Babe of Bethlehem makes. We see Him lying in the manger, or held in His mother's arms ; a tiny, helpless child, surrounded by all the marks of lowliness and poverty ; and our hearts are touched by His weakness and His dependence on His young mother for every thing that He needs ;

and as we look at Him the voice from Heaven says to us, "Behold your God."

Welcome, all wonders in one sight !
Eternity shut in a span !

So, too, when we go in thought to the garden with Mary Magdalene on Easter Day, and see the empty tomb where the Body of Jesus had been laid on Good Friday, and hear the angels say, "He is not here, for He is risen," our hearts swell with glad triumph ; and it is with souls on fire with thankfulness that we greet Jesus who was crucified, dead, and buried, when we see Him in the strength and glory of His Resurrection.

The Story of Whit-Sunday is wholly different in its appeal. There are the disciples, to whom in various ways the Risen Lord had appeared after His Resurrection, gathered together in the Upper Room. Their Master has withdrawn Himself from their sight, and has ascended into Heaven. But before He took His journey He promised them that they should be "endued with power from on high," and "baptized with the Holy Ghost." So in faith they waited ; and on the Day of Pentecost the promise was fulfilled. There was "the rushing, mighty wind" ; there were the fiery tongues ; and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." It does not move us, as does the Birth in the stable ; it does not stir us, as does the Resurrection from the grave in the garden ; but it is just as important for us as either of those two great events ; for it is by the coming of the Holy Spirit that our Lord carries on through the ages the great work for which He came down from Heaven, the salvation of the world. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to be "workers together with Him."

The Power of God the Holy Ghost to change men's lives.—Look at the apostles ; how marvellously changed they were. Their Master had warned them with intense earnestness that they would forsake Him in His time of need. They had protested that this could never be. Yet when His enemies laid their hands on Him in Gethsemane they all ran away and left Him ; poor cowards as they were. But after Pentecost they were heroes. They did not care for the threats which were made against them ; they even rejoiced when they were made to suffer for Christ's sake. The one thing which mattered was that they should tell out plainly the great truth which was everything

to them, that Jesus of Nazareth, who had died on the Cross, had risen from the dead, and was Lord and God.

These men chose death for their life, and shame for their boast ;
For fear, courage ; for doubt, intuition of faith ;
Chose love that is strong as death, and stronger than death,
In the power of the Holy Ghost.

So these "unlearned and ignorant men" "turned the world upside-down." The work of Christ was continued by them through the strength of the Spirit of God, about Whom the Master had said, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

And that same Spirit is ours.—When we were baptised these prayers were said for us : "Sanctify *him* with the Holy Ghost" ; "Give Thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that *he* may be born again" ; "Grant that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in *him*." And whenever good thoughts have come into our hearts ; whenever we have said things that were true and just ; whenever we have done what was pure and brave and noble, it has been by the influence of the Holy Spirit.

And every virtue we possess,
And every conquest won,
And every thought of holiness
Are His alone.

At our Confirmation we came—or shall come—to receive more gifts of the Spirit to enable us to resist temptation and live pure and holy lives. He prompts us to hate what is wrong ; to believe in truth and honour and goodness ; to care for justice and gentleness and kindness ; to make love the law of our life. "Quench not the Spirit," says St. Paul. He is a fire in our hearts, to consume what is bad, and to shine with heavenly light. Quench Him not in your own life by carelessness and wilful sin. Quench Him not in the heart of others by bad example, and sneering at what is good, and making light of what is wrong and hateful to Him.

J. C. H.

LESSON 29

Trinity Sunday

The Book of the Revelation : 1. How to Interpret it

[For the teacher's reading and study : Passages referred to in the notes.

The most helpful commentaries to use on the Book of the Revelation are those by C. Anderson Scott in the *Century Bible*, and in the *Series of Devotional and Practical Commentaries*, published by Hodder and Stoughton. The teacher is also recommended to read the notes of the course on the Revelation, Lessons 34-36, Higher Middle, Year III.

Careful reading and thought on the part of the teacher will certainly be needed to gain an intelligent understanding of the book, about which most Christians know little or nothing. But all who study it with such guidance as the following notes afford, find that its mystery, its inspiration and its power grow upon them. It should never be forgotten that the book was written to hearten and encourage Christians at a time when the blood of the saints was flowing like water.]

1. The Intentions of the Author.—The first step towards understanding any book is to ask what was in its author's mind when he sat down to write it. If we read a novel, thinking all the time that it is a history book, or try to turn a poem into a legal document, we shall go far astray. The Book of the Revelation has often suffered from such misreadings. Many of the difficulties which surround its interpretation are due simply to trying to find in it things which it never entered its author's mind to put in it. The innumerable attempts which have been made to discover a key to its meaning can be roughly grouped under three heads.

(a) Some have thought that the author's one object was to tell us what was going to happen at the end of the world. They say that he is thinking all the time about Christ's second coming, and gives the "signs" which will precede it and the events which will follow His appearing. That is to say, all that the book describes, at any rate after chapter 3, belongs entirely to the future. This was one of the earliest ways in which the book was used. There were considerable sections of the Church in the first three centuries, called "Chiliasts," (pronounce Kī-li-asts; from the Greek word *Chilioi* = 1000), who firmly believed that all that is said about the reign of the saints with Christ on earth for a thousand years would be literally fulfilled. It is from them that we get our word Millennium (from the Latin *Mille* = 1000) for a good time coming. And at the present day there are many who try to prophesy from particular passages in Revelation when the end of the world will be and what will then come about.

There are many difficulties in this line of interpretation. First, it ignores that St. John's language is symbolical and was never intended to be treated literally. (On this point see Lesson 34 in Higher Middle Course. Third Year.) Secondly, those who seek to learn from the book the signs of the end have never been able to agree as to what is actually to be expected or how the signs are to be recognised. If St. John really intended to reveal to us what the distant future would be like, he has failed totally, because the riddle is as obscure as though he had never written. And thirdly, we must remember that our Lord discouraged men from puzzling their heads about such questions. He taught that to "strive to enter in by the narrow door" was of more importance than to ask questions about the future (St. Luke 13 23-24; Acts 1 6-8).

(b) A second method of interpretation is to suppose that the book is a foretelling of the dangers and trials of the Church all down the ages. Along this line it is tempting to find references in it to all kinds of events in Church history. This was specially a favourite way of using the book at the time of the Reformation. The Protestants held that when St. John spoke of the woman clothed in scarlet (17 4) he had in mind the mediæval Roman Church; under the figure of the Beast he described the iniquities of the Popes; by Babylon he meant the papal supremacy and foretold its end (18 2); and so on. On the other side the Roman Catholics were not slow to find interpretation equally uncomplimentary to their opponents. The Beasts represented the Protestant sects; Luther's name was hidden in the mysterious number 666; and so on. We may safely leave all such ingenious explanations to cancel each other out; as do also more modern attempts to identify the Beast with Muhammad, Napoleon, or the Kaiser. Whatever St. John set himself to do, he did not compose hard riddles, which could not possibly be solved till hundreds of years after his death.

(c) The third method of interpretation is that which nearly all modern scholars adopt. They look for the explanation of every allusion in St. John's own times. He had always in his mind, as he wrote, the problems of the Church as he knew it. He saw Christians undergoing severe persecutions. He believed that the Roman authorities had determined to stamp out Christianity and to put to death everyone who withstood their will. And he was trying to unravel the perplexities of the future, to discover where Christ was leading His Church and to encourage his brethren

to believe that there was indeed a blessed and glorious future beyond the trials of the present. All his symbols and figures—beasts, Babylon, Sodom and Gomorrah, Gog and Magog and the rest, were all intended to refer to things within the experience of his own age; and his pictures of what is about to happen have all to do with the immediate rather than the distant future.

2. Apocalyptic Literature.—One reason why the book is difficult for average Christians to follow is that it is so unlike the other books of the Bible. But outside the Bible there are many writings with which it can be compared. These are called “Apocalypses” (from the Greek word *Apocalupsis*, which means the unfolding of a secret: it is the word translated “Revelation,” which stands as the title of our book). We have one other complete Apocalypse in our Bible in the Book of Daniel; and there are other apocalyptic fragments elsewhere, e.g. in Joel 3 9-17; St. Mark 13 (sometimes called “The Little Apocalypse”) and II. Thes. 2. Many others were read and loved by both Jews and Christians in St. John’s day, e.g. the *Book of Enoch*, from which a quotation is made in Jude 14 15, and the *Assumption of Moses*, from which Jude 9 derives its story about the dispute over Moses’ body. These other apocalypses have been carefully studied in recent years, and they give scholars great help towards understanding St. John’s book. Their common characteristic is that they are all written with the object of revealing some hidden secret which will encourage the faithful to stand firm against the most severe attacks upon their religion. Generally this revelation is an assurance that soon the persecuting powers are to be destroyed and God’s might will be exhibited on behalf of His servants. They have been called “Tracts for Bad Times.” The kind of questions which they try to answer are “How long is this time of hardship to go on?” (cf. 6 10); “What punishments are in store for our persecutors?” (cf. 16); “What will be the fate of the martyrs?” (cf. 7 9-17); “What is going to take the place of the present order when God’s rule is at last established?” (cf. 21 1-5).

3. Authorship and Destination.—The author of the book calls himself John (1 4, 9, 22 8). But it is by no means certain that he was the apostle, the son of Zebedee. He never claims to be an apostle, but only regards himself as a prophet (1 3, 22 6-7). One thing at any rate seems certain. The John who wrote the Revelation cannot be the same as the author of the Fourth Gospel. Dr. Charles, the greatest authority on the subject, says

that the language and style of the two books is so utterly different that it is impossible that they can have come from the same hand. This St. John the Prophet wrote his work in the form of a letter to seven Churches in Asia Minor, over which he exercised some authority (1 11) to encourage them to resist the attacks which were being made on their religion even to the death, and to proclaim the coming victory of the cause of Christ over the powers of the world (1 7, 22 12-15). He wrote probably about the year 95 A.D. But parts of his book may have been composed at an earlier date and then put together in a new shape to serve the needs of the Church under the persecutions which broke out in Domitian's reign.

R. W. B.

LESSON 30

The Book of the Revelation : 2. Chapter 13

[*To the teacher.* Since it is impossible to take the whole of the visions of the Revelation, we choose one typical chapter, which will illustrate some of the problems of interpretations of the book and the light which it throws on the early days of the Church.]

1. Its Contents.—At first sight, if we read through the chapter, it sounds like an account of some fantastic nightmare, rather than a representation of fact. The details are so strange that it seems hopeless to seek any reasonable explanation of them. Two horrible monsters appear. One is a combination of a leopard, a bear, and a lion, which has seven heads and ten horns. The other resembles a two-horned lamb, speaking in dragon-language. Both are engaged in making war on the saints, who are being forced by every kind of pressure and cruelty to worship an image of the first beast. Those who refuse are put to death.

2. The Origin of the Figures.—To understand the meaning of these grotesque figures we have to turn back to earlier apocalypses. All these contain descriptions of persecuting powers under the image of strange monsters. The earliest is probably to be found in Dan. 7, where four beasts appear, one like a lion with eagle's wings, one like a bear, one like a leopard, and a fourth which has ten horns. These are explained by an angel as representing four empires, (viz. the Babylonian, the Median, the Persian, and the Greek), the last of which should produce ten kings, to be followed by an eleventh (Antiochus

Epiphanes) who was to be the great persecutor of the Jews (see vv. 17, 24, 25). This passage became the pattern on which all attempts to explain the course of history and the arrogance of heathen powers were modelled. In our Apocrypha under the title II. Esdras we have a Jewish apocalypse, which is of much the same date as the Book of the Revelation, and was read by both Jews and Christians. In chapters 11 and 12 of that work will be found a vision and its interpretation which throws much light on Rev. 13. An eagle rises from the sea, having three heads, twelve wings and eight "little" wings. This figure is explained later in the vision: "The eagle whom thou sawest rising up out of the sea, is the fourth kingdom which appeared to thy brother Daniel in his vision; it is true, it was not interpreted to him as I am now to interpret it to thee." And from the explanations which follow it is easy to see that under the image of the eagle the writer is describing the *Roman Empire*: the twelve wings are its twelve emperors; the "little" wings are local governors in Syria and Egypt; and the three heads are the last three emperors, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, in whose reign the book was written.

3. The First Beast.—With this clue we have not much difficulty in seeing that St. John in describing the First Beast of Rev. 13 is simply referring in well-understood apocalyptic symbolism to the Roman Empire. By his day, as II. Esdras shows us, the fourth beast of Daniel had come to be transferred from the Greek to the Roman Empire. Therefore he takes over much of Daniel's imagery without trying to give it any special application (e.g. no satisfactory reckoning of the emperors can make them fit the *ten* horns). But he adds details which come from his own experience of what Rome is like. The emperors accept divine honours and are known by titles which should only be used of God ("names of blasphemy": 1, 5). They have determined to exterminate the true religion (6). Through their agency Satan ("the dragon") is striving to crush the Church for ever (4).

Some scholars doubt whether there really was any such settled policy on the part of the Roman government at this early date to make Christianity a forbidden religion. That may be so. Possibly they only interfered in most cases when they suspected that the Christians were guilty of bad citizenship. But there can be no question that St. John and most Christians were convinced that Rome had declared a war of extermination against the Church. They knew nothing of official intentions. But, when

they saw the vigorous campaign which was being carried on in parts of Asia Minor to force everyone to conform to the official state-religion, we cannot say that their suspicions were not justifiable.

4. The Number of the Beast.—If we still had any doubt as to what St. John is alluding to, it would vanish as soon as we recognised that in this chapter there are two hidden references to Nero, the first and most hated of the persecuting emperors. To make his meaning quite clear to his readers he ends the chapter with a cryptogram. "He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six" (18). In this number 666 is hidden the words "Nero Cæsar" in Hebrew. Each consonant in its Hebrew form NRVNKS R is given its numerical equivalent, and thus $50+200+6+50+100+60+200=666$. The other reference to Nero occurs in verses 3 and 12, where one of the heads of the beast is said to have been killed and come to life again. This is an allusion to strange legends which grew up about Nero after his death. He committed suicide in the country in 68 A.D. A few months later a rumour was started that he was not really dead, but had retired to the East and was biding his time to recover the throne. Towards the end of the century, when it was no longer possible for him still to be alive, the story took the form that Nero would soon rise from the dead and return to take vengeance on his enemies. Christians seem to have believed this story in the sense that the Antichrist would appear from the East in Nero's shape (cf. 17 11).

5. The Second Beast.—The identity of the Second Beast, who assists the Roman emperors in persecuting Christians is not quite so certain. But by far the most probable explanation is that it stands for the heathen priesthood of Asia Minor, especially the priestly guilds set apart for the service and propagation of the emperor-worship. Their mitred head-dress may have suggested the "two horns" of verse 11. They imposed on the credulity of the people by pretended miracles (13, 14). They had control of the markets and imposed conditions which made it impossible for Christians to trade in them (16, 17). This they did by insisting that all who bought or sold in them should bear the mark of the Beast. Probably this is a reference to the seals bearing the emperor's name and the year of his reign or his effigy, which had to appear on all business documents. Christians refused to use them for fear of countenancing the emperor-worship; and

they regarded all who consented to use the seals as having been branded with the Beast's sign.

We have here one of the many indications in the book how serious was the choice which Christians had to face in these days of persecution (cf. also 3 4 ; 14 12). They must decide absolutely between their religion and all the comforts and conveniences of life. The world boycotted them, and demanded that they should either conform to its ways or die. How hard it must have been to obey the injunction, " Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him " (I. John 2 15).

R. W. B.

LESSON 31

The Book of the Revelation : 3. The Last Things : Chapters 20-22

[*For the teacher's reading and study :* See notes preceding former lessons on the book.

Few indeed will fail to rise to the beauty and the gigantic faith revealed in these final chapters. The following notes will help to give an intelligent and therefore more vital understanding of the close of the book than could be possible apart from such guidance.]

1. A Confused Picture.—The need for some rearrangement of these last three chapters is generally recognised. As they stand, it is difficult to see any logical sequence in their sections. The course of events in the last days which they describe seems to be hopelessly confused. For example, in 20 9, 10, 13, 14 all the powers of evil have been destroyed. Yet in 21 27 and 22 15 the wicked still exist, though they are kept outside the gate of the new Jerusalem. Again in 20 9, 10 all the heathen nations, represented by Gog and Magog, are annihilated. But in 22 2 it is said that the leaves of the tree of life are " for the healing of the nations." Much of chapters 21 and 22 seem to belong to the time *before* the Final Judgment, which is described in 20 11-15. And when we come to 22 8-20, we find that it is obviously nothing but a number of disjointed scraps which are pieced together without any proper order or connection.

All this is in the greatest contrast to the earlier chapters of Revelation, where there is the most careful order and sequence of thought. Many theories have been suggested to account for the end of the book being in such disorder : e.g. that an accident

happened to some of the earliest copies, or that someone has inserted into this section visions which did not really come from St. John the Prophet (see explanation given in Lesson 29). But the boldest theory, and that which makes the best sense out of the chapters, is that of Dr. Charles. He believes that St. John never lived to complete his work. He died, by martyrdom or by natural death, after he had got as far as 20 3. But he had already written down on loose sheets notes of the visions with which he meant to end his book. After his death a disciple joined these together, in order to make it complete, but failed to put them in the right order. If so, it is an interesting task to try and rearrange the chapters and to conjecture what St. John believed was going to come about in the last days. Some of his ideas would probably have been more fully and clearly expressed, if he had had time to revise the visions.

The order in which Dr. Charles suggests the chapters should be read is this: 20 1-3, 21 9-22 2, 22 14-15, 22 17, 20 4-15, 21 1-5, 22 3-5, 21 6-8. And the sequence of events would then be :¹

(1) After the powers which have been persecuting the Church have been destroyed (19), Satan will be chained for a thousand years (20 1-3).

(2) The Holy City will then be established on the ruined site of Jerusalem. In it Christ will reign with the glorified martyrs for a thousand years; and the nations of the world will have one more chance of accepting the gospel and being brought within its gates (21 9-22 2, 22 14-15, 17, 20 4-6).

(3) At the end of the thousand years Satan will once more be loosed and make his last onslaught on the Church. His armies under Gog and Magog will attack the saints and be destroyed. Then Satan's power will for ever come to an end (20 7-10).

(4) The Final Judgment (20 11-15).

(5) The Heavenly Jerusalem will be established in which the saints will reign for ever; and the wicked cast into the eternal fire (21 1-5, 22 3-5, 21 6-8).

The important point to notice in this reconstruction is that there are two stages which must be kept quite distinct in our minds. They are separated by the mysterious interval of a thousand years, which St. John probably did not mean to be taken literally, but simply as indicating a complete epoch (cf. Ps. 90 4).

¹ The teacher must realise that this reconstruction can necessarily be only guess-work, and many scholars disagree altogether with Dr. Charles' views. But it is worth while reading the chapters through in the suggested order and grasping the good sense which it makes.

First *the Millennial Kingdom* of Christ upon earth is set up. Only when this has come to an end does *the Kingdom in Heaven* begin. One difficulty in grasping this distinction is that Revelation (as it now stands) uses the description "the new Jerusalem" for both of these. But the Holy City of 21 10 is not the same as the Heavenly Jerusalem of 21 2.

2. The Millennium.—St. John no doubt conceived the Holy City of the millennial period as something supernatural. But his descriptions can quite legitimately be applied to human society and the ideal towards which it ought to work. For in his mind it belongs, not to the future world, but to this earth. It is a development of present conditions, not part of "the new heaven and the new earth," when the "former things" have passed away. We make a mistake if we think that we have to wait till the other world for the vision of 21 9–22 2 to be fulfilled. We have in it a picture of what this world might be like, if Christ's rule in it became supreme.

The following characteristics of this ideal human society should be noted.

(a) It is compared to a city. There is no thought of "God made the country, and man made the town." But it is a city very unlike our dingy, germ-smitten, smoke-ridden towns. Its shape as a cube (21 16) suggests perfection. Its rich jewels and its street of gold suggest beauty and magnificence. Citizenship, i.e. men's living together for mutual strength and co-operation, is something permanently valuable in God's sight. We are meant, not to live solitary lives, but to share together all that is best in life.

(b) The city supplies all that is reasonable in men's needs (22 1, 2, 17). There is neither poverty nor excess in it.

(c) All evil is excluded from it (21 27, 22 15). Every sin against the Ten Commandments, such as lust, falsehood, violence, ungodliness, (shall we not add in these days gambling?) is anti-social and would spoil the healthy life of the city.

(d) The city lives not for its own enjoyment, but in order that all the world may be given the opportunity to share its blessings (21 26, 22 2), its purpose is to evangelise the nations which still stand outside its gates.

(e) The source of all its joy and activity is the nearness of God (21 22–23). Religion is not a side-line or an occasional occupation of its inhabitants. The whole city is a temple in which the presence of God is recognised and felt.

3. The Bliss of Heaven.—Now read 21 1-5 and 22 3-5, and notice how restrained St. John's language becomes, when he speaks of the final blessings of the saints. Cities, gates, trees, rivers, jewels, etc., may help to describe the purified and glorified human society which Christ's rule on earth can bring about. But no words are adequate to tell of the joy and contentment which belong to the spiritual world. We become necessarily vague when we think of them. But note:

(a) The bliss of Heaven is something altogether new. It is not an extension or enlargement of the joys of this earth. "The former things are passed away" (21 1, 5).

(b) The saints enjoy complete communion with God (21 3), and with Christ (22 4).

(c) The life of Heaven is not mere emptiness and cessation of activity. The saints share Christ's rule (22 5), and are occupied in service (22 3).

(d) There is freedom in Heaven from all that made this life arduous and sad (21 4, 22 3).

R. W. B.

LESSON 32

Why Should We Help the Work of Foreign Missions?

[For the teacher's reading and study: St. Matthew 28 19 and Acts 4 and 8.

The Missionary Secretary for the parish should be consulted for advice and the loan of any specially suitable literature. Current numbers of missionary magazines will give first-hand information of happenings in the mission field to-day. *The Missionary Message* (Oliphant, Anderson, 3s. 6d.) gives what is still a good survey.

This lesson may be regarded as introductory to the course which follows it.]

There are a good many people who contribute to the work of foreign missions without being able to give a reason for their action. There are a good many who refuse to contribute at all, and grumble that so much money is "sent out of the parish." The purpose of this lesson is dual: it is meant to convince the latter of the inevitability of foreign missions and to enable the former to give a reason for the faith that is in them. The main idea of the lesson is to show that the work of missions overseas is the natural expression of the spirit of Christianity.

(a) **Loyalty to Christ's Last Command.**—We always regard a

man's "Last Will and Testament" as a very solemn thing, and the law insists on a very careful adherence to its provisions. We feel we would be disloyal to a dead father if we did not fulfil his last wishes, whether written in his will or expressed on his death-bed. Just in the same way loyalty to, and affection for, Jesus demand that we should adhere to His last words. What are they? The last St. Matthew records are, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (St. Matthew 28 19, 20); while the last that St. Luke records before the Ascension (Acts 1 8) are a command to the disciples to be witnesses "in Jerusalem, then Samaria, then to the uttermost parts of the world." Although 1900 years old, the command still holds like any other of His commands; it merely demands from us a modern definition, such as "In England, then the Empire, then to the Esquimaux, the Nigerians, the Indians, the Chinese, and others in the uttermost parts of the earth."

"But" someone objects, "we can't all go." Quite so; but that is all the more reason why we should offer all the sympathy and prayer and material help that we possibly can to those who do go. Missionaries are people who are "sent" as our representatives, and therefore our support in every form is their due. (N.B.—Mission, from Latin *mitto*=send.)

(b) **Loyalty to Christ's Teaching.**—There are two correlative truths which are central in the teaching of Jesus. They are:

1. *The Fatherhood of God.*—God is the Father of all men—"The Father, from Whom every family in Heaven and on earth derives its name" (Eph. 3 15). In the Parable of the Prodigal Son we see that the Father's yearning for the son lost in his sins is as great as his love towards the saved one at home. God is the Father of the ancestor-worshipper of China, the fetish-worshipper of Africa, the Buddhist of Ceylon, and the cannibal of the Pacific Isles. Loyalty to Christ's teaching makes it imperative that we should cause this truth to be known to all, that the prayer "Our Father" may be uttered everywhere, every day, and that His Name may be hallowed by every living soul.

2. *The Kingdom of God.*—This part of the teaching is closely akin to the other, for the kingdom is a society or fellowship of brothers—a brotherhood, in fact. Let us see how all mankind is inevitably linked together into a brotherhood of economic service. The world every day becomes more of a unity, and the various parts more interdependent. "If one member is sick,

the whole body suffers " (I. Cor. 12 26). One reason for so much unemployment in England to-day is the confusion existing in foreign countries. Someone asked a Lancashire manufacturer why the cotton trade was so bad in 1923. The reply was, "India can't afford to buy our goods." "Why?" "Because her trade in hemp is ruined. Before the war she used to earn money to buy our cotton goods by selling her hemp to Russia. Now Russia can't afford to buy hemp because her money is valueless in other countries." So we can see that, because Russia is suffering chaotic confusion as a result of her Revolution, Lancashire is suffering from unemployment to-day. Here is another instance of the unity of the world showing how mankind is linked in mutual service. It is taken from Fosdick's *The Meaning of Service*, and it will interest children if teachers will make it apply in more detail and with variation to their own conditions, and show, too, how the labours of their own parents are a service rendered to other distant parts of the world (e.g. Lancashire weaver's work used by negroes, Indians, Chinese, etc.). "Ex-President Harris, of Amherst College, has drawn for us the details of one small area of a man's unescapable membership in humankind; when he rises, a sponge is placed in his hand by a Pacific Islander, a cake of soap by a Frenchman, a rough towel by a Turk. His merino underwear he takes from the hand of a Spaniard, his linen from a Belfast manufacturer, his outer garments from a Birmingham (Lancashire) weaver, his scarf from a French silk grower, his shoes from a Brazilian grazier. At breakfast his cup of coffee is poured by natives of Java and Arabia, his rolls are passed by a Kansas farmer, his beefsteak by a Texas ranchman, his orange by a Florida negro."

The fact is that we cannot live without one another; that we are all friends serving and waiting upon one another. But God wants this world-society to be more than an association for commerce. We are bound as members of the human family to give of our best to all the others. All the more are we bound to give the knowledge of redemption from sin and death that has been wrought for the world. To keep such knowledge to ourselves is a form of theft—an appropriation of another man's rights. Christ insists that the world shall be linked in the kingdom of love.

It took the Church some years to learn how universal Christ meant His Kingdom to be. St. Peter had to have the fact specially revealed to him before he would baptise Cornelius

(Acts 10), and even after that St. Paul tells us how he had to rebuke Peter for backsliding on this particular point (Gal. 2 11). The Jews wanted the Kingdom and Jesus to themselves. Consequently they were continually hindering Paul, who saw that the Gentiles were meant to share in it. "God has no favourites" (Acts 10 34, Moffatt).

To be opposed to, or even to be indifferent to, the work of foreign missions is to put ourselves in the same class as those who opposed Paul and took a narrow view of the Gospel.

(c) **Loyalty to Christ's Principles.**—One of the principles that Christ lays down alike for the regulation of right conduct in the individual and for the extension of the Kingdom is embodied in the words, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (St. Matthew 10 8); and, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20 35). If we have freely received the knowledge of salvation from sin through Jesus Christ we ought to transmit that knowledge. In fact, we cannot but do so. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel" (I. Cor. 9 16). Do we realise how much our home country owes to foreign missionaries from the Continent centuries ago? Listen to what a great saint of the Church says about the British in his day: "When I was a boy living in Gaul I saw the inhabitants of Britain eating human flesh, and, though they had herds of cattle and flocks of sheep enough, they preferred a ham of the shepherd or a slice of the female breast as a luxury." Just think of it! Except for the early missionaries we might still be cannibals to-day! Truly England has freely and bountifully received. It is sheer ingratitude not to repay.

(d) **Loyalty to Christ's Work.**—Christ came to save the *world* (St. John 3 16) and not any mere fraction of it. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all* men unto Me" (St. John 12 32). The redeeming work of Christ is therefore meant for every soul. He is "the Light that lighteneth *every* man that cometh into the world" (St. John 1 9). His work is not for one social class, nor for one racial family. It knows no social distinctions; it knows no racial differentiations. Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition (Eph. 2 14). It is therefore ridiculous to use the words "Christ" and "foreign missions" side by side. No nation or race can be foreign to Him Who is Saviour of all. "Foreign" is only a geographical term, not a religious one.

THE REV. A. H. AND MRS. WILKINSON,
late of Sichwan.

LESSON 33

Our Lord and the World's Chief Religions

(1) Primitive Beliefs

[For the teacher's reading and study : Acts 14 8-18, 28 1-6.

Note to the teacher.—In these days there is a great deal of glib talk, usually emanating from those who know little or nothing of any religion, about "one religion being as good as another"; and our young people are certain to come into contact with this sooner or later. If we do not help them, they may even be led to believe such assertions. Hence an indifference to Christ or a drifting away from Him may creep upon their lives: "What does it matter?" they think. The only reliable safeguards against this are (1) a clear and full teaching of the Christian Faith (many of us teach only part of the Faith); and (2) an intelligent knowledge of other religions and their doctrines. To give some information concerning the latter the following series of notes for six lessons have been written. It is impossible to deal adequately with such a vast subject in so short a space, but further help may be obtained from the following books, to which the writer is indebted: *Jesus Christ and the World's Religions*, by W. Paton (C.M.S. or S.P.G. 1/-); *Round About the Torres Straits*, by Bishop Gilbert White (S.P.C.K. 2/6); *Mary Slessor of Calabar*, by W. P. Livingstone (Hodder and Stoughton, 3/6); *Introduction to the History of Religions*, by F. B. Jevons (Methuen, 12/6).]

This and the five following lessons form a short course on our Faith compared with other beliefs. In these days when the world is becoming smaller and contact between races is so easily established it is our duty to acquaint our young people with the religious condition of the world, and to give them a vision of the glorious task before the Church and a call to take part in it.

Animism (Latin, *anima*, spirit) is the name that has been given to the primitive religions of non-civilised peoples because "the worship of spirits" is common to them all. Anything, dead or alive, may be thought of by primitive man as inhabited by a spirit. Authorities on the subject are agreed that this belief originated largely in dreams. In the dream, so uncivilised man reasons, the soul separates itself temporarily from the body, yet still continues to live and act independently. Similarly, it lives on after permanently leaving the body at death.

1. Spirits of the Living and of the Dead.—Illness is thought to be caused by the threatened departure of the spirit, and so the remedy is to win it to stay. The Haidah Indians have "soul-catchers"—bone implements for catching the patient's soul when it tries to fly away. When caught it is "returned" to the body. In a tribe in the Celebes the patient is whipped soundly, so that the spirit may feel sorry for its poor body and return to

save it from further hurt. In Sarawak, where it is believed that the spirit resides, not in the blood or the heart, but in the head or the hair, the patient is "cured" by the restoration of his soul in the shape of a bundle of hair. In certain tribes, even when the sick man has died, appeals to his soul to return continue to be made. Because it is thought that he will need the same things in the spirit world as in this life, wives and slaves may be slain that they may accompany him, and offerings are made to him from time to time.

No doubt, much of this is prompted by affection for the deceased but also it is very often accompanied by fear that the spirit may work harm upon those remaining behind. In either case there arises "worship of the dead."

2. Spirits Inhabiting Almost Any Objects.—Natural objects—animal, vegetable or mineral—have shadows or come in dreams; indeed, they may move, as running water, or grow, as trees or other vegetation. So they are readily believed to be inhabited by spirits. Even parts of the body—hair, nails, teeth—contain something of the soul, and therefore when they become separated from the body must be buried or otherwise safely hidden from the reach of an enemy, who might work harm through them upon their original owner. The following extract from *Round About the Torres Straits* (pp. 5 and 6) gives some slight indication of the practical results of such beliefs.

"The aborigines are by nature a cheerful and happy, if careless, race, or rather they would be happy were their whole lives not darkened by the shadow of the belief in witchcraft and evil spirits. No man considers his life safe from the malpractices of his neighbour, and if he suspects anyone of plotting against him, he tries to save his own life by killing his neighbour with the utmost speed. The way to bewitch your neighbour is simple, and always effective, if you can escape suspicion for the two or three days required for the charm to work. In Central Australia you take a small inscribed and pointed stone, and in Queensland, a piece of pointed bone about two and a half inches long, with a head made of spinifex wax, and lay it at night on the ground pointing towards your sleeping enemy. When the man wakes in the morning and finds the bone or stone pointing at him he believes that unless he can find the man who did it and kill him he will inevitably die, and die he invariably does by a process of what modern science would call auto-suggestion."

3. Fetishes.—Especially in Africa, the savage believes that a spirit may live not only permanently in a particular object but that one may enter a stone, a stick, a claw of a bird or beast, a

piece of glass, or anything else, and reside there temporarily. Such an object is termed a *fetish*, is worshipped and prized so long as it brings what we call "good luck," but failing this may be beaten, abused, cursed or even thrown away, in the belief that the spirit has left it. (Compare with the silly cult of "good luck" mascots and so forth in civilised England).

4. Nature-Gods.—The great powers of nature with their unfathomable secrets came readily to be worshipped by primitive man. The sun, moon, stars, a great river, lake, the sea, the returning seasons, or the power manifest in vegetation are all so mysterious, so essential or so helpful to man's existence that there is small wonder they have been and are still worshipped by the heathen. Egypt, for example, depends for its continuance upon the water and the fertilising mud of the Nile. What more natural than that the river should have been treated in earlier days as a god?

5. Primitive Religion and its Influence on Conduct.—As will have been gathered already from these notes, the result of animism in its various forms is to fill the life of primitive man with uncertainty and fear. It makes him cruel, murderous and given to many evil practices. Everyone remembers Mary Slessor's rescue-home for twin babies who had been exposed by their parents in the bush to be devoured by the ants or the jackals. "The belief was that the father of one of the twins was an evil spirit, and that the mother had been guilty of a great sin; one at least of the children was believed to be a monster." Occasionally, however, from very fear, evil conduct is prevented, as in the case of the negroes of the Congo, who, when one of their number went mad with sleeping sickness, were prevented from placing him on an island to starve and die, only by the thought that his spirit would return and plague them.

6. The Gospel Message.—Our Lord told Nicodemus that he must be born again, and at our Baptism we were born anew into the Kingdom of God. But the new birth of the animist on becoming our brother or sister in Christ is marked by even greater changes than were bestowed on us in Baptism. Instead of innumerable gods and spirits of whose intentions he is uncertain, he learns to know, to trust, to worship and to love the One Only God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Almighty and all-loving. Christ's first great message is that of redemption from the power of evil spirits. Later the convert begins to understand the

meaning of sin and of redemption from that also. The fact that he is an inheritor of eternal life brings peace regarding the future life. The other good things of the Gospel which help to make up his almost entirely new life will come readily to the reader's mind.

T. G-S.

LESSON 34

Our Lord and the World's Chief Religions

(2) Muhammadans

[For the teacher's reading and study : Gal. 5 16-26.

Selections from the Qur'an might be read in class.

A map of Arabia and surrounding countries is essential for an intelligent following of the notes. Further information may be obtained from *The Rebuke of Islam*, by W. H. T. Gairdner (S.P.G. or C.M.S. 3/-) ; *The Story of Islam*, by T. R. W. Lunt, (3/6) ; *Muhammadanism*, by the late Archbishop Lefroy (Camb. Mission to Delhi, 6d.) ; or *Yarns of the Near East*, by Basil Mathews (1/-).]

Life of Muhammad.—Muhammad was born at Mecca in A.D. 570, of the tribe of the Koreish, the noblest in Arabia. At the age of twenty-five he married Kadijah, a wealthy woman much older than himself, who bore him one or more sons who died in infancy, and four daughters. For forty years he lived a pagan. He seems to have travelled much on caravan journeys, and to have spent much time in meditation. In his fortieth year he became the recipient of revelations conferring upon him the office of prophet. For three years after this he carried on propaganda in Mecca and won adherents in his wife, members of his family and certain fellow-citizens. For ten years he continued his mission publicly, under the protection of his wealthy uncle, Abu Talib ; but on the latter's death he fell into disfavour in Mecca. It happened that the people of Medina were at the time engaged in civil war, and to settle their feud they invited Muhammad as a prophet to come and give them advice. He went to Medina in 622, from which year the Muhammadan era is dated. Here he organised his followers into an army, suppressed any who opposed him, gained adherence from certain neighbouring tribes and began raiding the Meccan caravans. In the eighth year of his migration he captured Mecca, and by the time of his death had imposed his religion upon the whole of Arabia,

suppressing the Christian and Jewish communities, and was even planning the subjugation of the Eastern Roman Empire.

It is not known whether Muhammad could read or write, but probably he could do a little of both. The nature of the Qur'an (*u* somewhat as in curl, *a* as in father) does not point to book-learning, but to hearsay stories narrated by people of different nationalities. The Qur'an is the Muhammadan's Bible, in which the prophet's revelations are recorded, "verbally infallible and eternally true." It contains many Old and New Testament stories in distorted form. To obtain a true idea of the prophet's teaching a good translation of the Qur'an should be read.

The fact that seventy millions of our fellow-subjects in India and vast communities in Egypt, Turkey, Arabia, Java and elsewhere are of this faith is in itself sufficient to demand our interest. Muhammad, whose successors are called Kaliphs, propagated his religion by the sword and enjoined his followers to do so. A remarkable instance of their methods is seen in the case of Java, which was conquered in 1478, when its twenty millions of inhabitants were offered Muhammadanism or death. Of course they chose Muhammadanism.

Strong Points in Muhammadanism.

1. Belief in one living God.—Muhammad recoiled from polytheism and the wickedness which he saw surrounding it and found rest in the thought of "submission" to God. The word *Islam* means *submission*; *Allah* means *the divinity*. The religion's creed is, "There is no God but Allah; Muhammad is the prophet of Allah."

2. Belief in the Resurrection and Last Judgment.—All flesh, it is taught, shall at the last stand before the Great Judge and receive the due reward of their deeds.

3. Belief in the Fact of Revelation.—That God is revealing Himself is a very important addition to the belief merely in the *existence* of God. This belief accounts largely for the great reverence accorded to the *text* of the Qur'an. (The writer of these notes had an Indian friend at the University who when eight years of age knew the whole of the Qur'an [not quite so large as the New Testament] in Arabic by heart without understanding it. He attributed his accomplishment to the "excellent teaching" of his grandfather!)

4. The Position assigned to our Lord.—

- (a) *His Virgin-birth* is held and taught.
- (b) *His entire and unique sinlessness* is asserted.

(c) *His Ascension into Heaven* is taught, but not His Resurrection ; for His Crucifixion is denied. It is asserted that someone else (usually believed to be Judas Iscariot) was substituted and that our Lord went bodily to Heaven. This is in keeping with an ancient Christian heresy. Muhammad seems to have derived much of his information about Christianity from heretical sources.

(d) *His Second Coming* is asserted, but to prepare for a great Muhammadan revival.

(e) *His Titles*—Spirit of God and Word of God. These seem to have been derived from Christian sources without knowledge of their meaning.

Weak Points in Muhammadanism.—The dual element in this religion appears to be a reflection of man's dual nature—upwards towards God, and downwards towards the brute beasts and Satan.

1. Erroneous Ideas of God.—God is thought of as a King and Despot, possessing unity, wisdom, and, especially, *power*. Moral attributes are almost excluded. Hence God is one who can order anything, good or evil. To understand the full bearing of this is to understand why the Turk can massacre defenceless men, women and children by the thousand, wiping out whole populations. In its influence on character this doctrine of God has led (a) towards *fatalism*: everything happens according to Fate ; sickness and death should be accepted ; (b) towards destroying true moral perception : God ordains even evil.

2. Very mechanical worship also results from these false ideas of God ; for *fellowship* with God is impossible. Man's right attitude is *submission*. Worship, therefore, is that of a slave to a despot, not of a child to a Father. The spiritual side of worship and the sense of mystery tend to be blotted out by that which is hard, external, material, formal.

3. Low Views of Paradise and its Bliss.—The rewards of the life hereafter, judged by the Christian standard, are easeful and revoltingly sensual.

4. Degradation of Women.—Muhammad's attitude towards women is seen from the fact that he allowed four wives to each believer, and, by a special revelation, more than four to himself : " This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee above the rest of the true believers." His own life, especially the later part of it, was, according to Christian teaching, very immoral.

" To the Moslem the life, teaching and personality of Muhammad are everything. His virtues and his vices have set the

standard of Moslem society for all time, and no criticism of Muhammad has any chance of gaining the ear of the faithful " (Paton).

Muhammad seems quite clearly to have been one who, appalled by the ignorance and heathenism of those around him, commenced reforms under the inspiration of high ideals, but later made the fatal mistake, which others have similarly made, of disregarding his conscience and of identifying the promptings of his own lower nature with the voice of God.

The Message of Christ to Muhammadans.—It must be remembered that Muhammadanism definitely repudiates Christianity: "O Believers! take not the Jews or Christians as friends" are the words of the Qur'an. Therefore because of this, and because the idea of God is that of an arbitrary despot and not of a loving Father, Redeemer and Sanctifier, the Christian's first and foremost message to Muhammadans must be that of *Love*. This love must be exalted so as to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ and in the lives of Christians. From it will develop the now lacking *sense of sin* as injury to the Father's love; *Redemption* from sin through the love of Christ; *Fellowship* with God aided through worship; and the *Purification* of the heart by the Divine indwelling, with its consequent liberation and uplifting of human nature both in men and women.

T. G-S.

LESSON 35

Our Lord and the World's Chief Religions

(3) India

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : Acts 17 16-34.

Further information may be obtained from *The Goal of India*, by W. E. S. Holland (C.M.S. or S.P.G. 2/-) ; *The Desire of India*, by S. K. Datta (C.M.S. 3/6) ; *India and Her Peoples*, by F. D. Walker (C.M.S. or S.P.G. 2/-) ; *Social Ideals in India*, by W. Paton (C.M.S. or S.P.G. 1/3) ; or *The Outcaste's Hope*, by G. E. Phillips (C.M.S. or S.P.G. 2/-)]

Hinduism.—This is the name given to the religion which has grown up, as it were, from the very soil of India. Those who practise it number more than two hundred millions and may be called Hindus to distinguish them from their fellow-countrymen who are Christians, Muhammadans or Buddhists. Hinduism is such an extraordinary medley at the present time that it is

impossible to understand it without a knowledge of its history. *It has no founder* but is traced back to the Vedas, or earliest sacred hymns of India. These speak of numerous gods, particularly of nature, such as the heaven, rain, fire and so on. Pantheism is the predominant religious note. To-day the simpler religion of the Vedas is not to be found in India for it has been overlaid by later teaching, although sentences from them are used in worship and at ceremonies.

The Brahmanas and Upanishads are writings which have arisen out of the Vedas and represent a religion of elaborate ritual and sacrifice, having for its object riddance from sin and reconciliation with the supreme power of the universe, called *Brahmā* (neuter). This is considered to be the impersonal essence of the whole of creation, "actionless, passionless, unmoving, unaffected, free from sorrow, pain or change." The ultimate aim of man, therefore, is to be absorbed into Brahma, freed from all "worship, comfort, pleasure, business, property or government"; for with Brahma the human soul is essentially one. Although Brahma is not creative, but passive, it gave rise to the world in this way. By meditation it gave existence to a productive seed, from which developed a golden egg, out of which was born *Brahmā* (masculine) the creator of all things.

Caste is enjoined by the sacred literature of the Hindus. It is believed by the greatest authorities on the subject to have arisen through the nations which conquered India desiring to suppress the conquered people of the land and to prevent inter-marriage with them. Some think that successive waves of conquest account for the fact that originally there were four chief castes: *Brahmans* (priests, peculiarly akin to the divine); *Kshatriyas* (warriors); *Vaisyas* (merchants); and *Sudras* (servants, or menials). Below these are the *Outcastes*, of whom there are more than fifty millions in India to-day, and whose "social and religious condition is unspeakably degraded." In course of time a great number of castes have arisen so that to-day "caste divides India into 2,378 water-tight compartments."

It is difficult for those who have not been in touch with its actual working to imagine the strangle-hold of caste upon the finer human qualities. Here is an example. "Three years ago in a town in the North-west of India a Brahman child fell into a well. All the men of the family were away, and the women were unable to reach the child. A sweeper (untouchable) ran up and offered to go down the well and rescue the child, but his

services were spurned, and the child was allowed to drown. Better death than defilement of child and well by the touch of a sweeper " (see *The Goal of India*, p. 58).

Akin to this is the *degradation of woman* in India. She is thought of as belonging to an inferior order, and this because of sin in a former life. Even though she be of Brahman caste she may not hear the Vedas recited or eat with her husband. She is married in childhood, and this is explicitly required by the Hindu scriptures. The last Census showed that there were 335,000 widows in India under fifteen years of age, of whom 17,700 were under five, and 1,014 under one ! All these are doomed to life-long misery and many to vice ; for a widow may never re-marry.

The Three Great Doctrines of Hinduism.

1. *Wandering* (Samsara)—known to us by the name Transmigration of Souls. According to it the soul wanders through many incarnations of men and animals.

2. *Works* (Karma)—a doctrine to explain why a soul is born at one time in one body and at a later in another : *because of the works done in a previous existence*. Karma " conceives humanity as a bundle of hermetically sealed tubes down each of which one soul lives out its solitary 8,400,000 existences, unaffected and unaffected by the rest. Pity and philanthropy are misplaced. They only thwart justice. Each soul is reaping its own deserts. Best not interfere. I am *not* my brother's keeper."

3. *Release* (Moksha) is the final aim and goal of existence and means absorption into Brahma. It is the result of divine illumination and not of works, which latter can only determine the next link in the wandering chain of rebirths.

Buddhism grew out of Hinduism. Gautama, the Buddha or Enlightened One, lived in India about 500 B.C. He was not concerned with God but with the true way of life. Such virtues as gentleness, simplicity, and humanity owe their presence in Hinduism largely to him, and with this teaching went reverence for animal life. But he still taught the doctrine of Karma, and although he prescribed noble conduct he entirely omitted belief in God and hence in prayer, forgiveness, grace, immortality. There is little if any Buddhism in India to-day, but it has made for itself a home in Tibet, Burma, Japan, and China. Pictures of its monasteries, monks and nuns are familiar to English readers.

As a reaction against the cold atheism of Buddhism there arose in Hinduism the idea of Avatars or *incarnations of deities* mentioned in the sacred literature. The chief are Vishnu, the

Preserver; Siva, the Destroyer; and Brahma, the Creator. Much of the worship of Siva and his wife Kali is revolting and grossly immoral. Vishnu has many incarnations, but the chief are Rama and Krishna. The story of the former is told in the *Ramayana* and of the latter in the *Mahabharata*, part of which is the Bhagavad-gita, or Lord's song, which has been called the "Hindu gospel," so greatly is it read and prized. But in the *Puranas* Krishna is portrayed practically as the incarnation of lust, and this has polluted the minds of millions of people.

Several attempts have been made to reform Hinduism. *The Vedanta Philosophy* (about 500 to 1500 A.D.) teaches that the universe is simply an *illusion* (Maya). "The doctrine of Illusion now occupies a place in Hindu thought corresponding with the doctrine of Wandering, Works and Release" (C. F. Andrews).

Some of the reform movements have declared a belief in God. The *Arya Samaj* (Society) claims to have returned to the pure religion of the Vedas, while the *Brahmo Samaj* teaches a view of God and Jesus similar to that we know as Unitarian.

The Gospel of Christ brings great liberation, light and life to the Hindu heart.

(i.) *It brings the message of God*—One, Supreme, Eternal; of Christ Jesus His only-begotten Son, our Redeemer; and of the Holy Spirit Who inspires our every good thought, word and work.

(ii.) *It brings Forgiveness*—for Hinduism lacks the sense of sin and the need for reconciliation with God.

(iii.) *The Gospel brings the message of Brotherhood* in place of the rigidity of caste, which allows anything approaching brotherhood only within the caste.

(iv.) *It proclaims the liberation and the dignity of womanhood.*

(v.) The Gospel does not say, Escape from the world and have nothing to do with it; but, Escape from the allurements of the world to be a fellow-worker with God in the manifestation of his redeeming love for the world.

But it must not be thought that the best of the Hindus have nought to bring with them when converted to Christ. Among their most precious contributions will be those qualities which arise from active contemplation and the power of meditation; for in these they are often trained from childhood.

T. G-S.

LESSON 36

Our Lord and the World's Chief Religions

(4) China

[For the teacher's reading and study : Eph. 6 10-20.]

Further information may be obtained from *The Uplift of China*, by A. H. Smith (C.M.S. or S.P.G. 3/-) ; *China and Modern Medicine*, by H. Balme (C.M.S. or S.P.G. 3/6) ; or Talks on a Chinese City, by F. D. Walker (C.M.S. or S.P.G. 1/-)]

The Country.—China is a mighty country with a people able to trace its history to 3,000 B.C. or earlier, having a common language, exceedingly hard-working both intellectually and physically, and forming one-quarter of the entire population of the world. At its command are “resources of coal, iron and other mineral products exceeding those of any nation on earth—even of the United States of America. There is, for instance, enough coal already geologically surveyed in China to supply for centuries the whole human race at its present rate of consumption.” Since before the time of Confucius the country has enjoyed a remarkably virile civilisation which, strange to say, has progressed scarcely at all until recently. But to-day China is coming under the influence of Western knowledge and culture ; and the race is wonderfully adaptable. It cannot be foreseen what eventually will be the result of the great revolution of thought now beginning, but that it will have a profound influence on the future history of the world no thinking person can doubt. If that influence is Christian, it *must* be well with China and the world ; but if not, what will happen ?

The Religions of China are, in the main, three, and we must think of each in turn : (1) Confucianism ; (2) Taoism ; (3) Buddhism.

Confucius (551-478 B.C.) is the Latin form of his name K'ung-fu-tzu, used by the early Jesuit missionaries (see Lesson 23, Higher Middle, Year 1). His great work seems to have been to clarify and expound the Chinese view of life. His father, who was a distinguished military officer, died when his son was three years of age, leaving his household in poverty. Confucius obtained public employment, but soon came to devote all his time to reading and teaching. Pupils and even distinguished scholars from all over China came to him. Later he was invited by the Marquis to apply his ideas in the state of Lu, where he became virtually Prime Minister. It is recorded that his success was phenomenal : crime disappeared. But jealous rivals brought

about his dismissal. The remainder of his life was spent in teaching and editing the Chinese classics. Their influence on China is to us almost incomprehensible. They became, and still are, except for the penetration of Western ideas, the subjects for the whole of education in China, and all public officials from the highest to the lowest obtain their posts through proficiency in these works.

The Religion of Ancient China.—This formed, as it were, the foundation on which Confucius had to work. It may be divided into (a) the worship of Shang-Ti, or the Supreme Ruler; (b) the worship of Ancestors; and (c) the worship of Spirits.

(a) Goes back to the very beginnings of Chinese history and embodies lofty spiritual ideas. Sometimes Shang-Ti is called Tien, "Heaven," in the classics, and Confucius adopted the use of that name. Only the Emperor may worship Shang-Ti, but he does so as representing the people.

(b) Is of great antiquity and almost certainly began with celebrations and offerings in honour of dead heroes. Reverence and worship are now paid to all ancestors. "The ancestral tablet is a thin block of wood, say eight inches by two, with a sliding panel." Behind this is written the name, date of birth and death of the departed, the name being on the outside also. It is placed on a shelf or shrine near the entrance of the house, and after a special ceremony the spirit is supposed to inhabit it. Daily worship, in the form of prostrations, offerings, libations, the burning of incense and paper money, is offered to it. With the addition of new ones in the home the tablets of the earlier generation are taken to the ancestral hall of the village, where the whole clan unites in worship on certain occasions.

(c) Animism, with a vast multitude of gods and goddesses, has played its part in Chinese as in most religions. Even in the worship of Shang-Ti there are other tablets of by-gone emperors, the sun, moon, stars, clouds, rain, wind, etc., placed near the tablet of the Supreme God and subordinate to it. Confucius condemned animism and idolatry, but not so his followers. By a strange fate Confucius himself is now worshipped as a god, and has been raised since 1907 to first grade worship, such as is paid in person by the Emperor to heaven and earth.

The Teaching of Confucius was summed up by himself in the word "reciprocity." He taught the golden rule in a negative form: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." But when he was told that Lao Tzu was teaching that

injury should be recompensed with kindness, he could not understand it and said, "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness." Confucius taught that there are five principal relationships in life: prince and subject; father and son; elder brother and younger brother; husband and wife; friend and friend. If these are duly regarded all is well with the State.

Of the relation of God to man and of this life to the world to come he taught nothing. "Not knowing life, how can we know death?" he asked. Also he believed that man's nature is in itself good with no consequent need of redemption. Further he did nothing to raise the position of women, who have always been looked upon as destined for menial tasks and inferior to men in China. The binding of women's feet so as to fit a shoe from two and a half to five inches long is still in many cases practised, and is a sign of subservience and inferiority; although the Chinese themselves now have a society for its abolition, originally founded by an English lady, Mrs. Archibald Little.

Taoism is founded on the teachings of a philosopher named Lao Tzu, who was born in 604 B.C. Tao, the chief element of his teaching, has been translated Reason, Principle, Way, Nature, and means much the same as Wisdom in the Old Testament (see Job 28). He taught the returning of good for evil, that war is wrong, and he did not agree with Confucius that man can be made good by law. Man should allow nature to work spontaneously in his life, Lao Tzu taught, and not try to conquer the forces against him by his own self-will. This led to his advocacy of withdrawal from the world and thus he did less for his country than Confucius, whose great desire was to improve its condition. But to-day Taoism, in spite of its original mysticism and philosophy, has scarcely "a single redeeming feature. Its assumptions are wholly false. . . . It encourages and involves the most gross and abject superstitions, such as animal worship of 'The Five Great Families'—the fox, the rat, the weasel, the snake, and the hedgehog. On the drum tower in Tientsin it was common to see richly dressed merchants kneeling to an iron pot containing incense burned to 'his Excellency the rat,' and the like." In fact Taoism has brought China under the whole bondage of animism, and Chinese demon-possession is a very terrible thing.

Chinese Buddhism has travelled far from the teachings of the Buddha (see p. 114). For his doctrines that God is unknowable

and that Nirvana is the final and highest end of existence have been substituted the worship of the Buddha himself, of many beings ready to enter upon Buddhahood, and the idea of a material paradise where fellowship with these gods may be enjoyed. Prayer, meaningless to Gautama, is common in the temples, and the Tibetan prayer wheel may be seen in some districts swinging even from the hands of the children. Of the hordes of priests, monks and nuns it has been said that they "like those of Tao, are for the most part idle, ignorant, vicious parasites on the body politic. . . . Here and there a Buddhist priest has embraced Christianity . . . Now and then with the willing consent of the people, a temple has been turned into a Christian church."

The Gospel Message to China is very similar to its good news to the animist ; for it is a remarkable and to us almost incomprehensible fact that nearly every Chinaman is at one and the same time a Confucian, a Taoist, and a Buddhist. After such a confusion and welter of gods the Gospel brings the knowledge of One God revealed in Christ Jesus. It brings a higher standard of conduct than taught by Confucius and the means of grace to live up to it, of which grace Lao Tzu felt so sorely the need but could not point the channel. It brings the true doctrine of sin and of salvation ; it proclaims the liberation of women ; it gives complete assurance of victory over death and of eternal life. It is for us to see that this message is not withheld now that great and vital changes are sweeping over China.

T. G-S.

LESSON 37

Our Lord and the World's Chief Religions

(5) Japan

[For the teacher's reading and study : Rom. 8 1-16.

Further information may be obtained from *Talks on Japan*, by C. Padwick (1/-) ; *Six Outline Missionary Lessons on Japan* (C.M.S. 2d.) ; *The Glory of Japan* (S.P.G. 1/-) ; *Talks on Japan* (6d.)]

The History of Japan cannot be traced earlier than the sixth century A.D., the time when the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons were invading our shores ; and her earliest records date from the eighth century, when in England, Bede and Caedmon were beginning our national literature. For many centuries, until within the

life-time of some still living, she remained "mediæval."¹ From the twelfth till the middle of the last century the country was ruled by the Shoguns (Generals), heads of the military caste, who took all executive power into their hands, the Mikado being kept in the background as nominal ruler. But in 1868 came the Great Revolution, when the Shogun was overthrown, his office abolished and the Mikado restored to full power. Since that date Japan has gone forward with exceptional rapidity and her modernisation is one of the most striking facts in history. By brilliant copying of Western methods she has within fifty years stepped into the front rank of world powers. She now possesses an educational system acknowledged to be one of the finest in the world, including compulsory elementary education for her eight million children, and has several universities with thousands of students. She is only just beginning adequately to cope with her serious industrial problem. The sweating has been so terrible that it has been truly said that many of the Japanese goods sold in England have been dyed with the life-blood of our brothers and sisters of Japan.

In 1906 the Japanese Christian Student Movement cabled to the Student Volunteer Convention at Nashville a greeting in the form of a question which still remains unanswered: "Japan leading the East, but whither?" All Christians will bear responsibility for the answer that is finally given.

Japan has Three Religions (not including Christianity): (1) Shintoism; (2) Buddhism; (3) Confucianism. The last-named has had considerable influence upon Japanese thought but is now found chiefly among the educated and is not very extensive.

Shintoism has grown up in Japan. "Shinto" means the "way of the gods," as distinct from "Butsido," the "way of Buddha." Shintoism seems to have originated in the worship of dead ancestors and in animism, many characteristics of which it still retains. This will be seen from the fact that throughout the country to ward off evil spirits there are "amulets worn on the person, charms over doorways, bits of cloth fluttering over walls, straw ropes stretched across temple gateways or bunches of tinkling glass hung from tea-house eaves." Innumerable

¹ The writer of these notes has spoken with an officer of the British navy, who, as a midshipman in about the year 1865, climbed a hill and watched a Japanese battle fought between men in chain and plate armour and armed with swords.

deities are worshipped, including among the more important, the Mikado, the sun goddess, and the rice god.

Reverence for Tribal Ancestors is an important part of Shintoism and differs from Chinese ancestor-worship in that reverence is paid to the tribal and national heroes and ancestors, rather than to those of the family.

The Worship of the Mikado spread over Japan through the advocacy of the men of Yamato, a tribe which mastered the whole country and had been in the habit of worshipping their chief, called the Mikado. They declared the sun to be his ancestress and himself the vicegerent on earth of the sun and of the gods. The blood-red sun on the Japanese flag is the symbol of the Mikado. "His portrait is kept as a precious possession in every school: it is . . . hidden away in a recess and only opened on great occasions: one master, in turn, sleeps at the school so that in case of fire he may save the precious picture: one teacher nearly lost his life in rescuing the picture from a burning school; when portraits are exposed for sale in the shops, a piece of tissue paper is laid over the face of the Mikado, so sacred is he." The religious patriotism fostered in this way has had a marked effect upon the national life. Shintoism has little personal, apart from national, moral teaching; but its insistence on personal, bodily cleanliness has had much influence for good.

There still survives in Japan from her feudal times a traditional code of honour called **Bushido** or "The Knight's Way." Its chief characteristics are (1) *Courage*. Most people are familiar with the wonderful fearlessness and heroism of the Japanese. (2) *Obedience*. "Loyalty is the life-principle that binds all into a common whole" is their saying; and the Japanese are taught most strict obedience to parents, elders and especially to the Mikado, before whose veiled portrait in the schools all reverently bow. (3) *Self-Sacrifice*. This quality in the Japanese has been exemplified again and again, as when, for example, during the Russo-Japanese War, many of the soldiers threw themselves into a bridgeless moat to allow their comrades and the guns to cross over their bodies and sweep on to victory.

Buddhism was introduced in 552 A.D., and still flourishes in Japan. It is divided into many sects, the Jodo and the Shin sects being of the greatest importance. The latter is more numerous and important than all the others. Its distinctive doctrine is that a divine essence, the Buddha, has received many incarnations, including the Mikado and the national heroes.

There is evidence to show that the Shin sect has been influenced by Christian doctrine. Amida Buddha, for example, is worshipped as an incarnation of the Buddha who appeared as a monk and registered a vow that he would not return to complete Buddhahood unless he could thereby save suffering mankind. He in the end won a place in Paradise whither all may go who call in faith upon him. Christian methods are also being copied, as in the formation of a Y.M. Buddhist Association on the lines of our Y.M.C.A. In practice, the people go from a Buddhist temple to a Shinto shrine indiscriminately ; but competent judges think this is but a sign of the increasing agnosticism and religious indifference of Japan.

The Message of the Gospel may easily be seen in contrast with the present religion of Japan.

1. *Knowledge of God.* The Japanese religions through their countless images, idols and spirits, have failed to make God known ; but in Christ He is revealed as the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Blessed for evermore, the Alpha and the Omega, from eternity to eternity.

2. *The Right View of Human Life.* The Japanese recklessly waste human life, which in general they esteem lightly. Christ tells them that each life is precious in the sight of God and must be accounted for by its possessor and by those who influence it.

3. *The Ideal of Character.* The Japanese ideal is shown in their representation of their hero with " his face distorted by a fierce frenzy of passion, his eyeballs glaring, his hair flying, and his hands holding with a mighty grip the two-handed sword wherewith he is hewing to pieces an enemy." Christ came not to destroy but to save ; through perfect obedience to the All-loving Father to liberate mankind from sin and death. Thus He will raise Japan to a higher ideal of life ; He will uplift her womanhood and give purity and truthfulness, which at present are not strong elements in the character of the individual Japanese.

T. G-S.

LESSON 38

Our Lord and the World's Chief Religions

(6) His Message to All

[For the teacher's reading and study : 2 Cor. 5 11-19.]

Further information may be obtained from *Jesus Christ and the World's Religions*, by W. Paton (1/-) ; *The Future of Africa*, by D. Fraser (2/-) ; *The Missionary Message* (Oliphant, Anderson 3/6) ; or *Talks on the Races to be Won*, by F. D. Walker (1/-).

Note to teacher. This lesson is intended to be a summary of the teaching of the five preceding ones, some attempt being made to indicate the extent and the glory of the task committed to all Christians. Of the population of the world, estimated at 1,653 millions, 565 millions are Christians and 1,088 millions non-Christians. Of the latter, 222 millions are Muhammadans, 217 millions Hindus, 138 millions Buddhists, 301 millions Confucianists and Taoists, 25 millions Shintoists, and 158 millions animists.]

I. In all the religions about which we have been thinking there is (a) belief in a power or powers outside, greater than and independent of man ; (b) a sense of subordination to and dependence on these powers ; and (c) desire to worship them.

II. The Age-long Search.—These three main influences implanted by God in every human heart have impelled man, in a search for their satisfaction, along various paths. He has sought to see and to recognise the action of these higher powers in animate and inanimate objects of the earth and of the heavens. He has imagined anything and everything to be inhabited by spirits, and this has led to Animism. This primitive religion has persisted in later systems. At times in the history of a nation some great prophet has arisen to try to raise his fellow-countrymen to loftier beliefs, worship and conduct. Thus Muhammad revolted against the gross superstitions and idolatry around him in Arabia, and although there are many elements which are degrading in his teaching he certainly, by proclaiming the supreme sovereignty of the One God, left his followers with a better religion than that with which he found them. Similarly Gautama, the Buddha, while still teaching many of the false elements of his native Indian religion, endeavoured to lead his people to a more perfect way of life ; and although he taught that God was unknowable, together with many other doctrines which are not true of His nature, he yet proclaimed absorption into the Deity to be the highest end of existence. Confucius and Lao Tzu in teaching a better way of life proclaimed respectively submission to Heaven and to Reason. In all these, whether we consider the tendencies of

animism or the more highly organised pagan religions, there is to be observed an age-long search by man for peace, light and truth, with the very important addition that in spite of teaching to the contrary, man seeks his soul's satisfaction in personal relationships. Although the Buddha taught that God could not be worshipped, he had not been dead many years before his followers were worshipping *him*, and similarly Confucius who condemned idolatry and Lao Tzu who "knew nothing of gods and goddesses," soon came both to be worshipped as occupying a high position among a multitude of gods.

III. The Great Christian Doctrines are summed up for us in the Creeds. The Nicene, as being the fuller, may be used, reference being made to the Apostles' Creed as desired. The teacher should ask the class to find the Creed in the Holy Communion Service, and then go through it clause by clause, comparing its doctrines with those of the religions we have been considering. A Prayer Book Commentary should be consulted. The following notes may help.

"One God the Father Almighty."—A few preliminary sentences on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Three Persons in One God will be necessary to avoid confusion. Contrast with the many gods of other religions and with the One God of the Muhammadans who is a Despot rather than a loving Father, Redeemer and Sanctifier. "The climax of the Christian Gospel is that God is love; He has not only the power but the will to protect His worshippers." His children may take to Him all their joys and sorrows, their struggles, failures and successes. His love and His power are immense realities; He understands, sympathises, effectually helps. The heathen coming to this knowledge lives a new life because his relationship to God is entirely new. "*One Lord Jesus Christ . . . Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate.*" What the whole world had vainly sought to achieve through sacrifice, burnt-offering, fast and even self-mutilation, God gave as a free gift through the sending of His only Son, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, being truly of His nature or essence, God, Who for our sakes became man, hazarding all He had that He might save us from the power of sin and death. Thus God in His supreme love was revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, Who as a historical person lived and gathered His disciples around Him, teaching them about God and themselves, proclaiming and living a higher life than had ever been revealed on earth, until He was put to

death by order of the Roman Governor. The record of His life may be read and no historian worthy of attention would attempt to deny its authenticity. Much of the teaching He gave to His disciples may be grasped by any who care to read their records with a sympathetic heart and thus to share in their experience. Christ is a Person, and the Christian life consists in fellowship and communion with Him. Contrast this with the chief prophet idea in Muhammadanism ; with the unknowable, completely passive Brahma of Hinduism and Buddhism and man's endless re-incarnations in his journey towards his own final and complete passivity ; with the Heaven or Shang-Ti of Confucianism, its worship of ancestors, the war god Kuan Ti and innumerable other deities ; with Taoism, its many gods and its behest to man to live a perfect life by developing according to unimpeded nature ; with Shintoism and its patriotic idolatry.

"The Third Day He Rose Again"—proclaiming with unmistakable certainty man's victory over death. There is neither tribe nor nation on the face of the earth that has not some sort of belief in some kind of existence after death ; but our Lord proclaimed its true nature. That life has not the shadowy indefiniteness of the Jewish idea ; nor the somewhat similar conception of the Greeks and Romans ; nor that wherein the released spirit comes and dwells in a little tablet of wood in a family shrine ; nor the fear-provoking vindictiveness of animistic beliefs ; nor yet the interminable pilgrimage through numberless incarnations. We shall still be ourselves, with our own characters and powers, but separated from the body and nearer to God, or, as we say, "with Christ."

"The Holy Ghost"—also One in nature and essence, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son ; the Inspirer of every good thought, word and work : the Strengtheners, Comforter, of man's soul : the Guide through the ages in man's search for Truth. Even the good among the heathen and much more the Hebrew prophets were or are inspired by Him. Contrast with the sympathetic magic of animism and other religions, their sorcery, witchcraft and necromancy, all used in an endeavour to gain the aid and inspiration of powers and persons other than man's own ; with the materialism of Confucianism and its injunctions as to man's conduct but failure to indicate how power to obey such behests is to be gained ; or with the fatalism of Muhammadanism.

The converted and baptised heathen finds all this so wonderful,

and the liberation which it brings so great, that he is indeed born again, into a new Family with new and all-sufficient relationships.

[The teacher should not find much difficulty in dealing in like manner with the remaining chief clauses of the Creed and contrasting the beliefs expressed with those of the various heathen religions: "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" (add "The Communion of Saints" from the Apostles' Creed); "One Baptism for the remission of sins" (add "The Forgiveness of sins"); "The Resurrection of the dead, and the Life of the World to Come."]

T. G-S.

LESSON 39

The Christian and the Newspaper

[For the teacher's reading and study: James 1.

Catechism: Duty towards neighbour.

The notes should be so used as to stimulate thought and discussion, and, if necessary, the subjects should be pursued on other Sundays.]

This and the three following lessons form a short course on matters very intimately connected with the Christian's relation to the world around him and to certain problems of every-day life. Such guidance as is here given may be of life-long value to our young people, who usually find it very difficult to obtain right leadership in these subjects.

Some Preliminary Considerations.—Before attacking our subject we may well consider the position of the Press in England, as follows:

(a) *Its immense range.* Think of the spectacle supplied by a train or a tram full of men coming into the city in the morning, almost every passenger reading his morning paper. Think of the same at night, nearly every passenger reading his evening paper. Remember that the average man reads a daily morning paper, a daily evening paper, a local weekly paper, probably a Sunday paper; a weekly golfing, gardening, or similar paper connected with his special sport or hobby; possibly a religious weekly connected with his Church, such as the *Church Times*, the *Methodist Times*, or other denominational paper; sees, at his club or elsewhere, leading weeklies, such as the *Spectator*, *Saturday Review*, etc.; buys one or two, perhaps several, monthlies; and very likely studies carefully one or more trade journals. His mind is largely occupied with newspapers.

(b) *Its influence.* Many people find it hard, some find it impossible, to think for themselves. All of us are naturally influenced by what we read, what others are reading, and what is stated with an air of authority. The mind of the average man is not merely occupied by the newspapers, it is largely formed by them.

(c) *Its opportunities for good or evil.* There are many subjects, and those often the most important and vital, upon which all but a favoured few can obtain no information except through the newspapers. Subjects of *to-day*, just because they are of to-day, are not yet to be found treated in encyclopædias and history books. The ordinary man has to depend, for his knowledge of foreign affairs and great social and industrial movements, upon what he reads in the newspapers. If the Press possesses such wide range, such immense influence, and such opportunities for good or evil, it is clearly the duty of every Christian man and woman to ask the following questions: (a) How can I make the best use of the Press? (b) How can I help to secure a good Press for my country? (c) What is the present condition of the Press in England?

The Purpose of the Newspaper.—Before we can say whether we are making a right use of our newspapers and magazines we must ask what purpose they exist to serve. What are they for?

We may distinguish three main ends or purposes, namely: (i) pleasure and recreation; (ii) practical utility; (iii) instruction and self-culture. All these are proper and legitimate ends. Let us consider each.

(i) Pleasure should find a place in every life, since

All work, and no play
Makes Jack a dull boy.

So then the half-hour a man spends reading about a cricket or football match, or the shilling he spends on a magazine of fiction, is not wasted, nor a thing the strictest Christian need be ashamed of. But we must be on our guard, in this and all matters of pleasure, not to let it degenerate into careless self-indulgence. We must not spend too much time or too much money. Almost everyone fritters away on desultory reading time that might be much better employed. Almost everyone wastes too much money on light literature, such as papers, magazines, etc. How many men who regularly buy a daily morning and evening paper,

a weekly paper, a Sunday paper, two or three papers connected with their hobby, a business paper, and perhaps half a dozen magazines a month (total not less than 2s. a week for papers alone, with 2s. to 4s. a month for magazines) would be horrified if asked to give 10s. a quarter to their Church levy! How many people who spend a couple of hours a day over the newspaper declare they can "find no time" for Bible reading! Here are two useful tests to apply if you feel you are spending too much time and money on newspapers: (a) How does what I spend in this way compare with what I give to my Church, to missions, and in charity? (b) How does the time I spend in this way compare with what I spend in prayer, worship, and Bible study?

(ii) When we consider practical utility the case is rather different. Do we try to read all that will help us not merely *to get on* in our business but *to do it well*? A clergyman once spoke to a young professional man about reading the journal of his profession and keeping himself abreast with the latest knowledge. The young man replied that no one would benefit but his employers, and that he "did not believe in taking business worries away with one, once one has left the office." Does a man who regards his life's work in this way do his best to serve God and his fellow men?

(iii) One of the most important uses of the newspapers is their use in self-culture. Here there is both a danger and an opportunity. The danger is one of shallowness and lack of balance. Mr. Balmforth, in his remarkable book, *Is Christian Experience an Illusion?* writes, "the vast output of printed matter, containing almost every conceivable variety of wisdom and folly, bewilders and stuns the minds of millions who have been taught to read, but not to digest what they have read. Acute mental indigestion produces a chronic disability to make up one's mind." On the other hand, a wise use of newspapers and periodicals will result in a cultured mind, alive to the problems and questions of the day. Here then are suggested rules for newspaper readers.

1. **Decide how much money, and how much time, you may justly devote to this pleasure, and try not to exceed your limit.**

2. **Try to select the best newspapers and magazines, avoiding those which have a low moral tone, which are trashy and silly, or which, for any other reason, you feel to be inferior.**

3. **Take care that some proportion of your newspaper reading is devoted to your business or profession.**

4. In the more serious part of newspaper reading each man will follow his own line ; foreign politics, social questions, recent science, current literature, and other subjects suggest themselves. No man has a right to say, " I take no interest in public affairs." Ask yourself, every now and then, " What do I remember of what I have read during the last three months ? " This will **guard you against mere desultory reading.** Ask yourself, from time to time, " Do I know anything clear and definite of the subjects and persons which one hears discussed in trains and clubs and general society ? " A newspaper cutting book, into which you paste any cuttings that specially interest you, or touch the subject you are most concerned with, will, especially if carefully indexed, prove immensely valuable, and the effort of keeping it will add value to your reading.

How to improve the Press.—It is often said that newspaper proprietors have to give their readers what those readers want. There is a certain, perhaps a large, amount of truth in this. If, then, anything obviously hostile to religion or offensive to morality appears in a paper a courteous letter of protest to the editor sometimes does good. Also a letter of appreciation may be sent where a paper has handled a religious or moral subject well. A young Churchman or Churchwoman with any gift for writing can do valuable work by keeping the local paper supplied with items of religious and ecclesiastical news. This may lead in time to regular journalism. Newspaper controversy is an art which needs learning, and an ill-equipped writer, entering into controversy on religious topics, may often do more harm than good. But *someone* must do this work, and everyone must make a beginning some time. Certainly Christian people might make more use of the secular Press than they do. For what has been said of a nation's government may be said of a nation's Press, " Every nation has the Press it deserves."

P. G.

LESSON 40

The Christian in Business

[For the teacher's reading and study: James 2.

Catechism: Duty towards Neighbour.

A wise teacher will find the following notes of the greatest value in giving to a class of young people right principles to apply to the problems of the business world; and it cannot be too clearly emphasised that our adolescents need help in thinking out right principles more than in any other direction; for theirs is the period of life during which ideals of permanent value are formed, and these cannot be true unless built upon sound thinking.]

Some preliminary considerations.—This is a subject of the greatest possible importance. Unfortunately more nonsense has been talked about it than on almost any other subject. This has encouraged practical business men, irritated by the nonsense they often hear from the pulpit and platform, to deny that religious considerations have any place in business. "Business is business, and religion is religion," they say, "and no good comes from trying to mix the two things together." But to say that religion has no place in business is to deny that Jesus is the Lord of *all* life, since it is to withdraw one whole sphere of man's life from His sovereignty.

So those who desire to apply the principles of the Gospel of Jesus to business should lay to heart the directions given in II. Peter 1 5-7, and "giving all diligence, add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance (i.e. self-restraint); and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." All these things, knowledge, self-restraint, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity have often been markedly absent in discussions on such questions as "Can a man be a Christian in business?"

What is business?—When very young and inexperienced people are discussing the question quoted in the last paragraph, one often hears them say, "In business you have to sell a thing for more than it cost you. So all business is dishonest"; or, "If a man buys, meaning to sell again, he does so hoping the price of what he buys will go up. If it does, he gains; if it falls, he loses. So all business is gambling." All this, of course, is mere nonsense and shows a complete ignorance of the nature of business.

What then is legitimate business?

The essence of legitimate business is that the business man or

woman performs some useful service for the community and receives a share in the general wealth of the community in return.

Think of a large family of colonists on a lonely Canadian prairie, every member of which does something. Father ploughs and sows the fields; mother cooks and manages the house; the eldest son hunts and traps; the second fishes in the lake; the eldest daughter spins and weaves; the second cures fish and salts meat for the winter; and so on. All render some service; all share according to their needs in the resulting wealth.

Think of England *as it ought to be*. Some would make the laws; others administer them; others again work the fields or mines or fisheries; others distribute goods wholesale or retail; some would teach the young; others doctor and nurse the sick; and so on. All would render some service and share according to their needs, in the resulting wealth.

The imperfections of our system of creation and distribution of wealth are great and admitted by all. But whether they are (a) inseparable from all competitive systems or (b) due to faults of human nature, one thing is certain, the essence of legitimate business is this: namely the performing of some useful services to the community.

Example I. The grocer, draper, or confectioner buys wholesale, and then sells at a price of from 20 per cent. to 35 or 40 per cent. higher. This is not dishonest. He has performed a useful public service in keeping his shop open. Let the reader think what it would mean if, every time he wanted a $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of tea he had to fetch it from the East India Docks, London, and even there could not buy less than a caseful at a time, and he will realise what service the grocer charges for when he sells retail.

Example II. A wholesale house buys from a number of mills. The goods *may* rise in price before they are sold or they *may* fall. Mill-owner, wholesaler, and retailer try to avoid this uncertainty as far as possible, by making long contracts and other methods of insurance. But the mill-owner makes his profit by the addition which he makes to what he paid for the raw cotton *as payment for his services in manufacturing*. The wholesaler, when supplying the shops will quite rightly put on a certain proportion of the sum he paid the mill-owner *as payment for his services as distributor*. And the shopkeeper will quite rightly, and indeed necessarily, charge you and me more for an article in his shop than he gave for it wholesale *as payment for his services as retailer*.

So then, whatever may be the **actual** shortcomings of our

society, we may say that looked at **ideally** (a) Society is God's household and family; (b) Every kind of legitimate business is the doing by "every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry" of some useful service for the whole family.

The Duties of the Business Man.—Keeping this conception of business clear before our eyes what are the duties of the business man?

(i) *His duty to God.* This is summed up in the word "stewardship." All he has, and is, belongs to God: all abilities, time, opportunities, etc. He must use them to God's glory and will have to give account for them at the Last Day.

(ii) *His duty to his own soul.* So to work as to allow his soul to grow and develop. Not to become absorbed in the things of this world, and a slave of its "poms and vanities."

(iii) *To his neighbour.* To see, as far as he possibly can, that those who work for him, have every opportunity for bodily, mental, and spiritual development. To acquiesce in conditions which degrade human beings is to put "things" before "souls."

(iv) *To society.* "To learn and labour truly to get his own living," and that of those dependent on him, so that they may not be a charge on society, and to try to accept no money for which he is not rendering some useful return of service.

Practical Outcome.—If we consider these duties carefully we shall see that many thoroughly practical results ensue. As follows: (a) No man or woman has a right to live a purely idle and pleasure-seeking life. If owing to the possession of a private income, a man has "no profession" he is the more bound to do some useful public work in politics, social service, philanthropy, or learned research.

(b) No man has a right to earn a living by what is useless or harmful to society. A singer of comic songs at the Music Halls, or a drawer for a comic paper, earns an honourable living. Each adds to the happiness and pleasure of life, and some joy is necessity in every life. A bookmaker, or the designer of vulgar or indecent postcards, not only makes no useful return for his keep, but he injures society.

(c) If the work a man does is needed by, and useful for society, it is honourable, no matter how humble, and may be done to the glory of God. "All service ranks the same with God" (Browning, "Pippa Passes").

(d) Anything necessarily harmful to health or character cannot be justified in industry. A lady, hearing of the harm done by

lead poisoning in the potteries, said, "Of course it's very sad *but we must have crockery.*" If it were not possible to have crockery without men and women going to an early, and terribly painful, death through lead poisoning *we must not have crockery.* Better drink out of wooden or pewter cups. But we can pay a little more and have leadless glaze. Things are always less important than men.

(e) "In trade one has to do many dishonest things, or lose one's job." But in the long run to do the right thing, and trust in God, is not only the only right but the only safe case. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Proverbs 22 1) and to have a reputation as a man who won't do a shady thing is often a valuable trade asset. It is not true that; *in every case* it will pay, in the commercial sense, to stand out for righteous conduct. But if we only serve God when we are sure we shall not lose by it, what is our religion worth? If we dare risk all for His sake, He will take care of His own. It is a good thing for a clergyman, Bible Class teacher, or church worker, to collect instances where a bold stand for what is right has meant gain, not loss.

(f) "You can't be a Christian in business. A firm that tried to run its business on Christian lines, and to consider its employees, would be bankrupt in a year." The experience of many great English and American firms seems to prove the exact opposite.

P. G.

LESSON 41

The Christian in Civic Affairs

[For the teacher's reading and study : James 3.

Catechism : Duty towards Neighbour.

See note preliminary to the last lesson.]

Preliminary Considerations. Is not the city the chief sphere for training in, and exercise of, real Christianity to-day? For (i) Religion is distinctly a *social* thing, and Heaven is presented to us as a "heavenly city" (cf. St. John's Book of the Revelation, St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, etc.) (ii) Natural love and affection are enough to lead many men, even without the stimulus of religion, to do their duty in the home. And the international sphere is one in which few ordinary men have any opportunities of doing either good or evil. Intermediate between the sphere of home and business life on the one hand, and the sphere of national

and international life on the other, lies the sphere of civic life. Here it is true that

(a) Everyone has duties and opportunities ;

(b) None are likely to use these opportunities well unless they have a sense of duty.

(iii) As the public life of a city or borough grows year by year more complex there is a growing dearth of good men and women to sit on the Town Council, the Board of Guardians, the Education Committee, the Civic League of Help, and the various other statutory and voluntary bodies engaged in public work.

What are the Special Duties of the Christian as Citizen ?—Duties spring from *relations*. A man's duties to God spring from his relation to God as a creature and child of God. His duties to his family spring from his relation as a son, a husband, a father, etc. His duties in business are those of an employer, or an employee, a partner, a party to a contract, etc. What then are the specific duties of the Christian as a citizen ? **The citizen is :**

(i) **A citizen, (ii) A rate-payer, (iii) A voter, (iv) A person to whom the community may look for service** done in return for benefits received. What duties spring from these relations ?

(i) **As a citizen I owe obedience to Civic Laws** even in small matters. If in the street, the park, the tram car everyone did as he liked, life would be impossible. In schools a "civic sense" should be cultivated. To walk on the wrong side of the pavement ; to throw paper and other rubbish in the streets ; to deface walls with chalkings and scribblings and to spoil shrubs and flowers in parks and cemeteries ; all these things may seem trifling matters beneath the dignity of religion to notice. They are *bad civic manners*. If to behave in such a way in one's own house is bad, to do so in public is worse. But active opposition to civic authority is worse still. The rich motorist who is as awkward as he can safely be with the policeman who regulates traffic, and the poor man who tries to make trouble with the tram guard, offend against that Christianity in small matters which shows the true *gentle-man*.

(ii) The late Canon Barnett said that the modern form of the text II. Cor. 9 7, should run, "**God Loveth a Cheerful Taxpayer.**" Certainly we ought to pay our rates cheerfully, for these provide comforts and conveniences in which we all share, and which specially help and benefit our poorer neighbours. And as we cheerfully pay for public services so we ought to try to use them well and economically. R. L. Stevenson says, "Smuggling is

one of the meanest of crimes, for by that we rob a whole country *pro rata*, and are therefore certain to impoverish the poor." Is not this true of all petty dishonesty with civic things, as travelling beyond our right stage on a train ; using water to water the garden without paying the extra water rate for such use ; spoiling municipal property, etc. Each individual offence may be trivial and of small importance. It is the "civic sense" we need to cultivate.

(iii) **To exercise our Franchise, whether in Poor Law, Municipal, or Parliamentary Elections, is a Christian Duty** which ought not to be omitted except for some good and sufficient reason. But to cast an *ignorant* vote is worse than not to vote at all. **There is a real obligation on the Christian Citizen to study the Problems of the City he lives in.** Do you read, regularly, in the local paper the reports of the meetings of the Town Council, Borough Council, or Urban District Council ? Are you anxious to secure the best men for office ? Do you know the character of your local representative ? A well-known business man was once asked to stand for the Council of the town he lived in, and refused. At the dinner-table that night he was angrily attacking the Council as a set of second-rate men of no standing. "You can't expect any man of character and position to mix up with such a gang," he declared. His son replied, "That's all very well, Dad, but in that case you have no right to grumble that our rates are the second highest in England." The son was right.

(iv) **Study of Civic Affairs will give rise to Interest in Them.**—Interest in them will lead to desire to take part. Not everyone is fitted, or has time, to sit on the Council. Very many people could do some useful public work, in connection with a statutory or voluntary body. Education, poor law relief and infirmary work, after-care of school children, the Civic League of Help, voluntary probationary officer work, work with Play Centres and Happy Evenings, the work of such organisations as the W.E.A., the Oxford Extension Lectures, etc., work with cripples, the blind, the deaf, and the like ; the work of Lads' Clubs, Girls' Clubs, brigades, scouts, guides, the Children's Country Holiday Fund, and a thousand other activities need voluntary workers and offer opportunities of service. And the simpler types of work lead on easily and naturally to the more important and difficult. Life ought not to be all *getting* and *spending* ; giving should also have its place. And the best thing to give is yourself ; for service is better than money.

What Preparation is necessary for the Social Worker?—It is obvious that if a citizen offers service he should try to make his service worth accepting. How can he do this? It is impossible to answer this question in detail since there are so many kinds of service. But the following things are true for all. The good citizen, if he is to do *Christian service*, will need

(a) *A true religion.* Christ's work can only be done in Christ's spirit and power.

(b) *Self discipline.* Much work is spoilt by the faults of the worker.

(c) *Knowledge of the Special Work Undertaken.* Even the person who helps at a Play Centre will do better work after studying some good book on educational method, or taking a course on child-psychology. Obviously the public worker should know something of political economy, political service, education, public health or whatever other science touches his particular work. If public work is to be truly religious the worker must not forget St. Paul's claim "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II. Tim. 3 17).

(d) *Willingness to learn, patience, humility.* Many young people, taking up social work, want to be leaders at once, or at least to begin with the more important and responsible work. There is only one way in which the expert can be made. It is to begin at the bottom and work up.

P. G.

LESSON 42

The Christian in National and International Affairs

[For the teacher's reading and study : James 4 and 5.

Catechism : Duty towards Neighbour.

See notes preliminary to Lessons 39 and 40.]

Preliminary Considerations.—The ordinary man feels that he has little influence in national affairs, and less still in international ones. What effect will his views or wishes have on the policy of governments, either his own or those of foreign countries? Is he not practically impotent in such matters? The truth of the matter is that each man's opinion is a small, but none the less important, element of the vast mass of "common opinion," which in the long run shapes the course of the policy of nations.

Few, if any, of the statesmen of the Conference at Versailles, were at all satisfied with the terms of the *Treaty of Versailles*, or believed that the terms imposed on Germany were either just or workable. Why, then, was not a better treaty framed, and more merciful terms granted? Because there was not in any country—and certainly not in England—the volume of sane, instructed, Christian public opinion which would have rendered such a course possible. Notice, then, that in *all* good work one of the chief hindrances is a kind of false humility, a cowardly modesty, on the part of the ordinary Christian, which prompts him to say, “What can I do? What is the effect of my action or opinion? I count for nothing.” But the first essential in all good work is faith, and in this, as in all things, “we walk by faith, not by sight” (II. Cor. 5 7). How many men fuddle themselves with drink, or gamble, or live unchastely, or neglect religion, or take no interest in the politics of their city or country, because they say, “I can’t see that what *I* do is going to make all that difference.” The very essence of morality is to act, in all these matters, as if our action would make all the difference, and to believe that in the long run it will.

What is Required of the Christian in these Matters?—(i) *Sympathetic Imagination*. Here, as in the parallel case of Foreign Missions, what is lacking too often is interest, sympathy, and imagination. A dog run over at our door, moves us more than two million Chinese drowned by an overflow of the Yangtze-kiang; and some trivial question on the Borough Council bulks bigger than the “colour question” in the Empire. This is neither wickedness nor hardness of heart. It is failure of imagination.

(ii) *Knowledge*. There is no sphere of life where it is so true, as in national and international politics, that “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4 6). What does the reader know of any of the following matters?

The map of Europe as it is since the war.

The countries in Europe where famine is still a pressing and urgent danger.

The social and economic conditions of any of our colonies.

The nature of the “colour question” throughout our Empire.

The problems gathering round the question of native labour.

The problems in connection with immigration of Asiatics in Canada, Australia, and the United States.

The nature and causes of unrest in China.

The social and industrial conditions in the far East, and the extent of the competition of the East and the West.

The subjects most likely, in the near future, to cause another world war.

(iii) *Faith in Gospel Principles.* Even among Christian people there is in politics, as in economics, too much tendency to believe in "iron laws," which render the application of Christ's teaching impossible. As in economics people talk of "laws of competition," "laws of supply and demand," etc. which, they hold, render the application of the principles of the Sermon on the Mount to daily business impracticable, so they conjure up a doctrine of "realpolitic" (the word, like the teaching, comes from Germany) which teaches that only material considerations, the nature of frontiers, the length and navigability of rivers, the supplies of corn, coal, iron, oil, etc., really influence international politics. Ideals, faiths, loyalties, they say, in the end, count for nothing. But valuable as the "laws" of political economy or political science undoubtedly are, they are like the rules of arithmetic, abstractions from reality, not binding commands. It is quite true that "fine feelings won't alter the multiplication table"; it does not follow that if two children weigh six stone and three stone respectively, the mother will necessarily love the first twice as much as the second. So too the abstractions of political economy and political science are true within their own sphere. History proves again and again, that immoral policy is bad policy, and that Christianity in politics pays. But we must believe not merely that there are examples where the application of Christian principles has turned out good policy (as if a man should say "History affords many instances of two and two making four"), but that Christ's teaching *must be* applicable to world politics, as to everything else (as if a man should say "Two and two must be four").

What Practical Steps may a Young Churchman Take?—(i)
Far and away the best first step to take, if you wish to study international politics, is to begin studying foreign missions. Every problem of empire, every sanitary, medical, educational, economic, social, political and moral problem meets us in the mission field. The *Times Literary Supplement*, reviewing J. H. Oldham's *Christianity and the Race Problem*, spoke of the stores of information, experience, and wisdom accumulated by missionaries, and of the way in which colonial governors, and others in authority, gladly sought their help, accepted their guidance, and deferred

to their judgment. There are few better schools for the young man anxious to study world questions, than the parochial missionary guild.

(ii) *Try to find some time for serious study.* Read some good text-book of European History from 1815 to the present day. Read the history of your own country, at least from 1714 onwards, and, if possible, more extensively still. Make an effort to learn something of economics and economic history. The latter is an extraordinarily interesting subject, since how ordinary people lived, and what their lives were like, is always more interesting than battles, and treaties, and the crimes of kings and rulers. If you find it difficult to study these subjects by yourself, join a W.E.A. tutorial class, or attend a course of lectures by an University Extension lecturer.

(iii) *Select one special country to study.* Specialisation is always interesting. You can always pass on to a wider field of study when you wish to do so.

(iv) *Select one special subject*, such as (a) forced and native labour; (b) the colour question; (c) race and immigration; (d) factory life and conditions in non-Christian countries; or some similar question.

(v) *Read the more serious newspapers*, and start a newspaper cutting book for cuttings on your special subject.

(vi) *Join the League of Nations Union*, and if there is not one in your neighbourhood get your Vicar to have a meeting to start one.

(vii) *Consider carefully, and with prayer*, Gal. 3 27, 28, and Col. 3 10, 11, and try to apply this in your thinking and speaking of foreign, and especially of coloured, races.

(viii) *Try to become acquainted with foreigners*, especially foreign students, resident in England, and treat them as friends. Try to see and understand their views.

(ix) *Seize every opportunity of foreign travel.*

(x) *Pray for a spirit of brotherhood and goodwill between all nations.*

P. G.

LESSON 43

Women's Work in the Church

[For the teacher's reading and study : Gal. 3 28 ; St. John 4 27 ; St. Luke 8 1-3.

The teacher of a boys' or young men's class should not hesitate to take this lesson. It will do the youths all that is good to know the facts concerning women's liberation through our Lord and to consider the precious gifts which women are specially fitted to offer for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Anything which increases the adolescent's genuine respect for womanhood is of vital influence for good, and the subject of the lesson should be dealt with having that as one of its aims.]

Our Lord and Women.—" And . . . His disciples . . . marvelled that He talked with the woman " (St. John 4 27). Why ? Because in our Lord's time it was considered beneath a man's dignity to talk to a woman in public. Women in the Old Testament were often held in honour, especially prophetesses, such as Miriam and Huldah ; and Deborah was one of the most famous of the Judges. But, through the teaching of the rabbis, they were fast approaching a time when men in the synagogue prayers were to bless God, " Who hath not made me a Gentile . . . a slave . . . a woman " ; and when it would be taught that it was better to burn the Torah (the Jewish Law or Pentateuch) than to commit it into the hands of a woman. Women were regarded as inferior to men, and were not allowed full spiritual privileges. At the age of twelve a Jewish boy became a Son of the Law ; but there was no equivalent religious rite for a girl, the women's court in the temple was outside the men's ; they might not invade the inner and more sacred precincts of the men's court ; their witness was not accepted in the law courts. But by His attitude towards women our Lord sowed the seed of an entirely different conception of womanhood. It was, of course, impossible for Christian men to despise women, since our Lord had chosen to be born of a woman ; and all through His ministry our Lord taught spiritual truths to women as fully as to men (St. John 11 24-27). It was to a woman He first appeared after His Resurrection, and bade her tell the disciples (St. John 20 14-18). His teaching is full of natural references to women. Note how an illustration drawn from men's work is often instantly followed by one about women's work ; note how naturally they are linked together in His thoughts (St. Luke 13 18-21, 15 3-10, 17 35, 36, 12 53, 14 26, 18 29) ; and there are many instances of His tender care for women (St. Luke 7 11-16, 8 43-48, 10 38-42, 13 11-17, 7 36-50, 21 1-5, 23 27-31 ;

St. John 19 25-27). It was therefore in keeping with His whole thought about women that in the Christian religion—in contrast to the Jewish—He should have ordained absolute equality between men and women in spiritual privileges. We so take it for granted to-day that women should be baptised and confirmed and admitted to the Holy Communion equally with men that we forget that it must have been astounding to the Jewish Church of our Lord's day.

Women in the Primitive Church.—Women shared in the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and in the election of an apostle (Acts 1 14, 2 1); the Church of the first Christian congregation was an upper room in the house of Mary, St. Mark's mother. St. Paul was greatly helped by women. Lydia was his first convert in Europe, and offered the hospitality of her house to him; Priscilla was an apt teacher of the faith to individuals, notably to Apollos (Acts 16 14-16, 18 24-26); the four daughters of St. Philip the Evangelist were prophetesses; Phœbe was a servant or woman deacon of the Church; several names of women appear in St. Paul's list of Church workers in Rom. 16, and in his letters to Bishop Timothy he gives definite rules for widows and women deacons.

The Nature of the Ministry of Women in the Early Church.—Although our Lord made no distinction in spiritual privileges between men and women, He did make a differentiation in function in that no woman was made an apostle, or one of the Seventy, or was present at the institution of the Eucharist, or received the apostolic commission recorded in St. John 20 19-23. Consequently the practice of the Church has been to entrust the government of the Church and the administration of the Sacraments to men. But in the formative period of the Church's life three forms of women's ministry emerged, to be more clearly defined later on. (1) *Widows* (1 Tim. 5 3-6; Acts 9 39)—the poor widows, who lived on the alms of the Church, and whose service was intercessory prayer. (2) *Women Deacons* (1 Tim. 3 8-11—"wives"—women deacons—and Rom. 16 1)—women mostly of wealth and position, whose main business, like that of the deacons, was poor relief, doing for Christian women what deacons did for men. The Council of Chalcedon, 451, makes it clear that deaconesses were ordained as well as deacons; but the difference between the deacon and the deaconess which we know to-day was the result of the diaconate for men becoming a step to the priesthood. By the fourth century the duty of women

deacons was mainly visiting Christian women in pagan households ; tending sick women, and carrying the Eucharist to them ; helping in the anointing and instruction of women at Baptisms ; seating and supervising the women in church. (3) *Virgins*—young women, also generally well to do, who took the vow of celibacy, continuing to live in their own homes ; such were the martyrs SS. Agnes and Cecilia. We must not, of course, forget the quiet, unofficial services rendered by women at all times in the Church ; for example, the influence of Christian mothers over their children, such as Eunice (2 Tim. 1 5), Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, Anthusa, the mother of St. Chrysostom. We must also gratefully keep green the memory of the girl and women martyrs, such as Blandina, the little slave-girl, Perpetua, a young wife and mother, and the two already mentioned.

The Later Ministry of Women till the Dissolution of Convents.—When Christian men and women began to forsake the pagan world and live the common life in monasteries or convents, under the threefold vow of poverty, obedience, and chastity, in order that they might strengthen each other in prayer and holy living, the religious ministrations of women became more and more withdrawn into the life of the convent, and the deaconess became merged in the abbess or consecrated nun. Prayer was considered their chief work, and they said the full choir services of the Church (except such parts as may only be said by a priest) in their convent Churches ; but the convents were also centres of art and industry, and served as schools for girls and hospitals for the sick and poor. St. Hilda, the famous Abbess of Whitby, ruled over men as well as women. Five of her pupils became Bishops, and Cædmon, our first great English poet, was one of her cowherds.

Modern Times.—The dissolution of the convents—for which the primary motive was the rapacity of Henry VIII. and his ministers, although the closing down was justified in individual cases of grave abuse—left no place for the religious ministrations of women thus driven out into the world. But after many years, as women began to take their share in public life, Churchwomen began to build up splendid unofficial work for the Church, notably district visiting, Sunday-school teaching, G.F.S., M.U., Rescue work, and missionary work, including nowadays many nurses and women doctors. The Order of Deaconesses has been revived, and Sisterhoods with the threefold vow refounded, and many of them are doing magnificent work for the Church at home and overseas.

A newer development is Women Messengers—bands of women who help and teach in missions and crusades. Women now have their recognised place in the Councils of the Church, from the Parochial Church Council to the Church Assembly, and efforts are being made by Boards of Women's Work and other bodies to secure better training and better status for women Church workers. The Church needs all the service women and girls can give, and every older girl should be seeking to know first whether God is calling her to devote her whole life to the service of the Church, and, if not, what piece of work for the Church He wants her to do.

V. H.

LESSON 44

The Parish and the Diocese

[*Note.*—The Secretary of the Parochial Church Council should be asked for information and literature published by the Church Assembly concerning any points which may need further elucidation. The Diocesan Calendar gives much detail of the constitution of the Diocese and its parishes.]

This and the two following lessons form a short course containing information which every member of the Church of England should possess, so that he or she may take an intelligent and active part in the organised life of the Church.

One of the Greatest Mistakes in Religion is to think that the Christian Life is a Purely Personal and Individual Thing, between Oneself and God Alone.—This cannot be true, for our Lord compared it to the life of a branch in a tree (St. John 15 5) and of a member of a household or family (St. Luke 12 42), and taught us to say, "*Our Father*" (St. Matthew 6 9); and we are told that we are members one of another (Eph. 4 25) and fellow-soldiers in an army (II. Tim. 2 4 and Phil. 2 25). This is sometimes described as the corporate side of the Christian life (from the Latin *corpus*, a body). The individual side, one's own personal relation to God, is supremely important; but without the corporate side it becomes self-centred and unbrotherly. So Churchmanship, Church loyalty, is essential. We all wish to be good Churchpeople. What is it that makes "good Churchmanship"?

We know what it is to belong to an institution—a school, or

club, or trade union—and we think that its members ought to be loyal to it. But in this lies a danger. Your school or society is, after all, only a small part of God's great world, and if your loyalty stops there it will make you narrow and small-minded. Even patriotism "is not enough" (Nurse Cavell's great saying). There may be a narrow patriotism that makes one a bad member of the whole human race. It is the cause of wars. There are smaller and larger loyalties, circles within circles. The smaller ones have their value, and must never be lost. But they must be seen in their right proportion as compared with the larger. We should be patriotic about our town or village, but remember that it is only a part of the whole county, which again is a part of England, as England is of the whole Empire. And even the Empire is only a part of God's whole purpose for the world. If at any point we stop short in our sympathies, we get out of touch with the mind of God; we cease to think and to care as He does.

Now as to Religious Fellowship and Loyalty.—In this, too, there are the smaller and the larger fellowships. We begin with the smaller. Your first experience of Church fellowship was in the church and school of your own parish. To these you are deeply attached, for you owe so much to them. They claim your loyalty. But your own parish and its Church life and institutions are a part of something much larger. There is one event in your life in which that larger Church life touches you. Many of you have been confirmed. The Bishop who confirmed you represents something much larger than the parish. He is the head of the diocese, which is made up of hundreds of parishes.

What a good thing it is that parishes do not stand alone and independent, but are bound together in one diocese, and have to think of other interests besides their own. You know how bad it is for a person to live quite alone, with only himself to care about. It is equally bad for a parish, because it gets selfish and narrow, and just as individuals ought to help one another, the strong helping the weak, the rich helping the poor, so ought the parishes. In some parishes the Church life is strong and prosperous. Others are poor, and can hardly maintain their Church. Being members of one diocese under one Bishop, the strong and the weak parishes are bound up together. They should feel that they share one life, and that the welfare of one is the welfare of all.

Diocesan Life and Organisation.

Rural Deaneries.—We begin with our own parish—its church and institutions. But often there are meetings which belong, not to the parish, but to the rural Deanery. Most deaneries have Sunday-school associations, which are a great help to the schools in the parishes. And there are other ruridecanal organisations, and also the Ruridecanal Conference, to which the parishes elect representatives. The business of the Conference is to help forward Church life and work in the deanery.

Archdeaconries.—As parishes are grouped into rural deaneries, so rural deaneries are grouped into archdeaconries. There are generally six or seven deaneries in an archdeaconry, and two archdeaconries in a diocese, or in large dioceses three or four. The archdeacons have important work to do in helping the Bishop.

The Diocese.—The head of the diocese is the Bishop, assisted by his archdeacons and rural deans. There is also the Diocesan Conference, an important body of many hundreds of members, both clerical and lay. The conference has a leading voice in regard to the business matters of the Church, and ought to give all possible help on the spiritual side also.

The Electoral Roll.—You may have seen, in the early part of the year, a long list of names posted in the church porch. It is the Roll of the Church Electors of the Parish. Every baptised person over eighteen should be on the roll. You must get your name put on when you are old enough. The people on the roll—men and women—elect the Parish Church Council, as well as choosing representatives to the Ruridecanal and Diocesan Conferences, and they help to elect the people's churchwarden.

The Diocesan Levy.—This does not sound an attractive and interesting subject, but to the good Churchman it means a great deal. He thinks how many struggling parishes are helped and cheered by the grants made to them from the diocesan funds, and of all the important institutions which they support, and by which we all benefit. These funds give our parishes the opportunity of becoming unselfish, and of sharing one another's burdens. Let us help to make our parish large-hearted and generous and brotherly.

F. W. C.

LESSON 45

The Church Assembly

[*For the teacher's reading and study : I. Cor. 1 1-25.*]

Again for this lesson the Secretary of the Parochial Church Council should be asked to supply any further information that may be needed. The names of the diocesan representatives in the Church Assembly should be given, particularly those living near to or in the parish where the school is situated.]

The Oldest Institution in England.—We have learned about the parish and the diocese—a circle within a circle. But there is a much larger circle still. We are not just parishioners in a certain parish belonging to a certain diocese. We belong to the Church of England, which is a branch of the whole great Catholic Church of Christ. Fourteen hundred years ago our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were pagans. Then there came great missionaries from the Continent and from Ireland, and the English Church began its wonderful history. The Church is the oldest institution in England ; older than the Throne, and much older than Parliament. We belong to a great and ancient Church with a glorious heritage. We ought to be proud of it and very loyal to it.

Hindrances.—Now the Church of England has had great difficulties to contend with, and has never had a fair chance. In days long past it suffered from the interferences and even tyranny of Bishops of Rome ; then very often from the Kings and Queens of England. It was never allowed freely to live its own life and settle its problems in its own way. In later times—the last two hundred years—its chief hindrance has been in connection with Parliament. No changes of any important kind could be made except by Acts of Parliament. The procedure of Parliament is very slow, and there was always much obstruction. So it was most difficult to get anything done. There have been serious abuses and even scandals in the Church which could not be remedied, though many attempts were made, through the impossibility of getting the reforms through Parliament.

The Enabling Act, 1919.—At last this state of things became intolerable, and now a change has been brought about. In the year 1919 an Act was passed called the Enabling Act, because it enabled the Church to have some real control over its own affairs. It was settled that if any change was desired and agreed to by Church people, it should have an easy passage through Parliament without any risk of obstruction.

But the question arose, How was Parliament to know what the Church really wished for? A large society must have some means of making up its mind and expressing it. A society or a club always has its council or committee or some sort of central body to represent it, and to discuss matters and settle them. When people asked, "What council or committee is there that represents the Church?" the answer was unsatisfactory. The only council that the Church possessed was so little known, and to most people so unimportant, that few Church people had even heard of it. The name will mean nothing to you, but it is as well to know it, that you may understand these recent changes.

Convocations.—From ancient times the Church has had her "Convocations," as they are called. They were the only representative bodies that she had. They were better than nothing; but they had two great disadvantages. In the first place, there were two instead of only one; and often they did not agree together. One belongs to the north of England, and is called the Convocation of York, the other in the south is called the Convocation of Canterbury.

The reason why there are two Convocations is interesting. It is because our English Christianity has two sources. There were two missions that led to the conversion of England—one was from Rome, led by St. Augustine, who became the first Archbishop of Canterbury; the other, which was the earlier, was from Irish monks who settled at Iona, off the west coast of Scotland, and from there sent missionaries to the north of England. So it has come about that there are two "Provinces," as they are called—Canterbury and York—and two Archbishops. This is an interesting arrangement historically; but it has been a great hindrance to business, especially as the two Convocations until very recently have never been allowed to meet together.

The Church Assembly.—But a much greater disadvantage of the Convocations was this—that they represent the clergy only, and Church people generally have no voice in them. It was necessary, therefore, to set up a really representative body, and this has now been done. The National Assembly of the Church of England is one central council, and does really represent the whole of the Church, laity as well as clergy. It is a very important body, and all Church people ought to understand about it and take an interest in it.

The Assembly Consists of Three Sections, which are called "Houses"—the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy, and the

House of Laity.—They mostly sit all together for discussions but sometimes on important questions they vote separately, and all three houses have to be agreed before any measure can pass. It is a large body of about seven hundred members, representing all the thirty-eight dioceses of England. It meets for one or two weeks three times a year. Already it has done such good work that a number of important reforms have been passed which were impossible before. One of the chief of these was the establishment in every parish of a Church Council, which has in most cases been a great help to the clergy by giving the lay people a proper opportunity of taking part in the work of the Church.

So the National Church Assembly is the "Parliament" of the Church in England. It does not set aside the authority of the Bishops. The Bishops will always remain our spiritual rulers under Christ. But there are many things, especially on the "business" side of Church life, which the assembly deals with, and even in the more spiritual matters the Bishops are glad to have the support and advice of both the laity and the clergy.

F. W. C.

LESSON 46

The Church Catholic

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : St. John 17.]

The Prayer for Unity, to be found in the Accession Service at the end of the Prayer Book, should be used before and after this lesson.]

1. The Anglican Communion.—The parish, the diocese, the whole Church of England—so our thoughts about Church fellowship have been widening and expanding. Now a larger circle still. In the year 1920, at Lambeth Palace, the residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury in London, there was assembled a great number of Bishops from all parts of the world. The assembly was called the Lambeth Conference, and there were summoned to it all the Bishops from North, South, East, and West, who are in connection with the Church of England. For we belong to a fellowship that extends far beyond the British Isles, beyond even the British Empire. There were Bishops from the United States of America, as well as from China and Japan and other distant countries where the Church is doing her missionary work. This great fellowship is called the Anglican

Communion. Anglican means "English," and the Anglican Communion includes all Bishops and dioceses that are in fellowship with our English Church. The Lambeth Conference meets once in ten years, and deals with the great problems that concern the Church's life and work.

2. Other Communion or Churches.—The Anglican Communion, large and far-reaching as it is, is only a small part of the vast body of Christians of all sorts in all parts of the world. There are probably about five hundred millions of people who call themselves Christians (out of a total world population estimated at fifteen hundred million). Of these five hundred millions, Anglicans (English Churchpeople, and those in close fellowship with us) can hardly be more than a tenth part. What is to be said about all the others, and what is our relationship with them?

3. Episcopal Churches.—Let us begin with an important distinction. There are two great Christian fellowships or communions that agree with us Anglicans on a vital point. They agree with us in holding to Episcopacy, and in believing that the Bishops who rule the Church must receive their authority from those before them, handed on from generation to generation from the Apostles themselves. The largest of these two communions is the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholics disagree with us, unhappily, on important points; but about the government of the Church by duly consecrated Bishops we are agreed.

The other great Episcopal communion is the Greek or Eastern Church. One of the saddest events in Christian history was the quarrel and separation that took place about nine hundred years ago between Christians living in the west and centre of Europe and those in eastern Europe and in Asia. It was due mainly to the claim made by the Popes or Bishops of Rome to be absolute rulers over the whole Church (see Lessons 1-3). The Eastern Christians would not consent to this, and the Church was torn in two.

Five hundred years later the same sort of thing happened again, for much the same reason, between Christians in Italy, France, and Spain, on the one hand and English people and many in Germany and Switzerland on the other. This was the great change called the Reformation. This was not the starting of a new Church in England, but an unhappy split in the old Church of the West. It was perhaps inevitable because of the ever-increasing claims of the Popes.

So the old historic Church is like a great tree which has twice been struck by lightning, and has been split into three parts.

4. Non-Episcopal Communion or Churches.—Besides the Roman, Eastern, and Anglican Communion, who have kept to the ancient rule of Episcopacy, and are therefore all of them in direct descent from the Apostolic Church, there are all those many Christians whom in England we call Nonconformists—Wesleyans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and others. In the United States they form a large majority of the population. These Christian fellowships or communion have sprung into existence in the last four hundred years—some of them, like the Salvation Army, quite recently. There is much in their life and work which we can agree with and admire, but we also see how seriously the Christian life and witness is weakened by these manifold divisions. We cannot think that this state of division and rivalry is what our Lord intended for His Church. The blame for its existence must be shared by all. It has been an un-Christian spirit working in the whole Church that has produced it. Happily now good people on all sides do not waste time in blaming one another, but are praying and striving for the fulfilling of our Lord's desire "that they all may be one" (St. John 17 21).

The Bishops at the Lambeth Conference in 1920 discussed the subject of reunion very earnestly, and issued an appeal to all Christian people, in which they urged that we must have more generous and large-hearted thoughts about Church fellowship, and that we all have much to learn from one another. They also affirmed their conviction that the Episcopal principle, rightly understood, is not at all opposed to what is good and true in the non-Episcopal communion, and that it will prove to be the centre of the final and comprehensive unity, which God will bring about if we pray and strive for it.

5. The Church, One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.—And so we come to the last and largest circle. It was our Lord's purpose that His people should be "one flock" (St. John 10 16). Indeed, He made them to be one by making all to live the same life, as branches share in the one life of the tree, or limbs in a body. There are two kinds of unity—God-made unity and man-made unity. The man-made unity is like that of a club or society which man has made and man can un-make. But the kind of unity which God has made can never be unmade except by God

Himself. Such is the unity of a family or a tribe or race. Members of a family may quarrel and separate; but nothing can make them cease to be members of that family. So the oneness of all faithful people can never be really undone. We can misunderstand one another and separate; but while this *spoils* the unity of the Church it does not *destroy* it. We are right in affirming our faith in the *one* Catholic Church, Christ's mystical Body, of which we are all members. This should make us deeply dissatisfied with our divided condition, like a family that has quarrelled. We look forward to the happy day when barriers will be broken down; when the Church will be *one* outwardly as well as inwardly, and the splendid vision will be realised of one great Christian fellowship, large-hearted and world-wide.

F. W. C.

LESSON 47

"The Captain of Our Salvation"

1. Christ, the Great Healer of the Body

[*For the teacher's reading and study*: The teacher should read quickly through the narratives of healing in the Gospels. This need not take long, and will give a general impression more important than many details. A special study might be made of St. Mark 5 21-43 (Jairus' daughter and the woman with an issue of blood), St. Mark 8 22-26 (a blind man at Bethsaida), and St. Mark 9 14-29 (the epileptic boy). The class should be brought up to the question of prayers for the sick and the results that are to be expected.]

This and the two following lessons consist of three further studies of our Lord's character, continuing those of the courses for the two previous years (Lessons 47-49, Years I. and II.), to which reference should be made.

It is one of the most certain facts about the life of our Lord that He healed the sick. This was especially the case during the earlier part of His ministry, when there were many healings in Galilee, and apparently a few in Judæa, too. Many of these were of people who were possessed, it was said, by demons or "unclean spirits" (St. Mark 1 21-27, 5 1-20, 7 24-30). But many more were actually ill or crippled in various ways. Thus in St. Mark's Gospel alone we read of the cure of Simon's wife's mother, who was "sick of a fever" (1 30, 31), of a leper (1 40-44), of a man palsied, or paralytic (2 1-12), of a man with his hand withered (3 1-5), of a deaf and dumb man (7 31-37), and two blind men (8 22-25 and 10 46-52).

The other Gospels add several more. And we are told that such cures happened many times and in considerable numbers (St. Mark 1 33, 34, 39, 3 10, 11, etc.). On two and possibly three occasions we are told that He raised the dead (the widow's son at Nain, and Lazarus ; we are not told that Jairus' daughter was dead, but only that her parents and friends thought that she was dead).

And not only did Jesus do these things, but He told His disciples to do them too, and they found that they had the necessary power (St. Mark 6 7 and 13 ; cf. especially St. Luke 10 17), though in some cases they were not successful (St. Mark 9 18, 28, 29).

It was as though there was a sort of atmosphere of health about our Lord, and in one case it seems almost to have acted automatically, when the woman with an issue of blood touched the hem of His clothing and was healed (St. Mark 5 25-34).

Does Jesus Still Heal the Sick ?—The experience of the early Church is quite clear. It is perhaps best summed up in the closing verses of St. Mark's Gospel.

[The original ending of the Second Gospel was lost at a very early date, and St. Mark 16 9-20 were added by a writer in the second century. One of our oldest manuscripts tells us that his name was Aristion.]

These verses make it quite clear that when the first disciples went out to preach the Gospel, after our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, they believed that His commission that they should heal the sick still held good, and, indeed, that He Himself was " working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed." And they had the courage to put their belief into action. Again and again in the Acts we read of miracles of healing (3 1-10, 5 12-16, 9 36-40, 19 11, 12, 28 7-9). And the records of the Church are full of miracles of the same kind. Doubtless many of the stories of the saints are pure legend, but quite sufficient remains to show that Christian men and women have not once or twice, but many times, come to Christ for healing, and have not been disappointed.

After all, it is natural enough, for if we really believe that Christ is with us still, then surely His compassion and His power are not changed. And if we do not find it easy to believe that He can heal us or our friends it may be because we ourselves are to blame.

We must look, then, at the conditions under which Christ healed the sick during His ministry in the flesh.

The Conditions of Healing.—1. Those who were healed came to Jesus, or were brought to Him by their friends. In one or two cases (e.g. the centurion's servant, Jairus' daughter, the Syrophenician woman's daughter) others come to Him and ask His help.

2. The cure depends on the faith of the patient or his friends. In the case of the woman with the issue of blood it is her own faith; in those of the centurion's servant and the Syrophenician woman's daughter it is that of another. We are told that where faith was absent no miracle could be done. Of our Lord's visit to Nazareth we are told that "He wrought not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

3. We are not told that our Lord ever refused to heal any sufferer that came to Him; but it is certainly true in Christian experience that many people of the most serene and beautiful faith have nevertheless been acute and constant sufferers. And we have the striking fact of St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh," which was probably a physical ailment (perhaps malaria, or ophthalmia), and from which he was not released, despite his three-fold prayer (II. Cor. 12 7-9). From this we are justified in concluding that these may be cases when God permits sickness and ill-health, not for its own sake, but for some special reason, such as the training and building up of character. But that God normally wishes His children to have a healthy human life we may be quite certain.

Our Duty.—1. In the first place we, like the sufferers in Galilee, must turn to Jesus for help, whether for ourselves or for our friends. And that simply means prayer. We must say, "Thy will be done," but not simply with the kind of resignation which believes that God's will is for us to be ill. Rather we shall believe that God's will is for us to be well again; and so we shall meet our illnesses with courage and hope. We shall, of course, try to learn any special lessons of patience and love that God may have for us, and we may sometimes come to know our own selves and our faults much better in times of sickness, and that alone would make the sickness worth the while. But God is on the side of health, and we can pray to God for ourselves and for our friends with that conviction firm in our minds.

2. And that brings us to the second point. Everything depends on faith. The whole New Testament is full of that message. And faith is not just a belief that something is true. It is trust in a Person. We do not simply believe Jesus. We trust Him. We

trust Him to give the help that we or our friends need. And even if He does not cure us we still trust, for we know that He has some good purpose in all that He does, and that one day we shall understand it more fully.

3. We must do what we can for ourselves. Sickness is a challenge to us to get well again. But God has given us for this purpose a great deal of knowledge, some of it very wonderful. We have no right to be neglectful of the rules of health and then to expect God to work special miracles for us. The skill of the doctor is just as much a gift of God as any miracle. Read the wonderful account of the doctor's work in Ecclesiasticus 38, especially vv. 12-14: "Then give place to the physician, for verily the Lord hath created him; and let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him. There is a time when in their very hands is the issue for good. For they also shall beseech the Lord, that He may prosper them in giving relief and in healing for the maintenance of life."

And we must use common sense ourselves about food and sleep and cleanliness. In sickness we must nurse people properly. It is for our own sake that God leaves some things to us. See the end of the narrative of the healing of Jairus' daughter (St. Mark 5 42, 43), where Christ's power works the miracle, but the father and mother of the child are left to do the human tending and care that are necessary.

If everybody viewed sickness in this way there would be a great deal less sickness in the world. But of course we cannot expect to get rid of sickness altogether until we get rid of sin, for a great deal of human suffering is directly due to man's sin. And the most dreadful thing about sin is that it often makes others suffer. Where there is sin there cannot be perfect faith, and God cannot "do many mighty works, because of their unbelief."

L. W. G.

LESSON 48

"The Captain of Our Salvation"

2. Christ, the Great Strengthenener of the Mind

[*For the teacher's reading and study* : the most useful study to the teacher would be to follow through the life of St. Peter, noting the contrast between his character as it appears in the Gospels and in Acts.]

We saw last week that Jesus was and is the "Good Physician" of the body. His work of healing did not stop there. In some of the miracles which are recorded the trouble was more mental than physical, and we read of men whom we should now say were lunatics, or mentally deranged, restored to sanity (e.g. St. Mark 5 1-20). But these were rather special cases, and it is more important for us to think to-day about the work which Jesus did, and still does, for ordinary people like ourselves in the changing, renewing, and strengthening of character. For that is a thing that we all need. There are all sorts of faults in us that need correcting. If only we could get self-control, more pluck, moral and physical, more unselfishness and love, how much better and more useful our lives would be.

But Jesus can do just this very thing. Let us think about two people whom He changed in this way.

Nicodemus.—First of all a very simple case. We only know a little about Nicodemus. He was a member of the great Jewish assembly, the Sanhedrin, and as such was respected, a man of good education and high ideals. But he was rather a coward and very much afraid of the criticism of his friends, and when he first came to Jesus it was by night, so that nobody might know (St. John 3 1, 2). But later on we hear of him again, and now he is publicly standing up for Jesus and trying to get the Pharisees to give Him a fair hearing (St. John 7 50, 51). The coward has found courage, and he has found it in Christ.

St. Peter.—By far the most complete character-study in the Gospels is that of Simon Peter, the leader of the Twelve. He was doubtless, like the others, a young man, and not, as a stupid tradition of ecclesiastical art has made him appear, grey-haired and elderly. Not only was his mother-in-law still alive (St. Mark 1 30), but he lived a life of active missionary work for more than thirty years after the Crucifixion. He had the qualities and impulses of youth. He was quick in his devotion and love of his Master. It was his spiritual keenness of vision that first realised the truth that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah

(St. Mark 8 29). But the same confidence with which he took the lead among the Twelve led him to bad mistakes. Once he ventured to challenge Jesus as to the future course of His work, and was rebuked as a "Satan" or tempter (St. Mark 7 32, 33). His confidence was all on the surface, and could not stand a severe test. Once he walked upon the water to come to Christ, we are told, but at the critical moment his faith gave way, and he was beginning to sink, when Jesus reached out His hand and saved him (St. Matthew 14 28-31). The story of his denial of his Lord at the last is told at length in all the four Gospels (e.g. St. Mark 14 29-31, 66-72). And yet he was the man who had at least the courage to strike a blow for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, as St. John tells us (St. John 18 10). He was lovable, loving, impetuous, self-reliant, but he was weak. His character was full of unrealised possibilities, and, like so many of us, he was his own worst enemy. It was only by the hand of Jesus that he was saved again and again, and from worse things than drowning. And yet this is the man who stands up after the Resurrection to face hostile crowds, to defy the Sanhedrin and Herod alike, the recognised leader of the new and hated sect of the followers of Jesus. He has been transformed. His character is not merely strengthened, but changed—transformed into the likeness of the Master whom he served. And after many years of active preaching he died a martyr's death.

Can We Expect such a Change as This ?—These special cases do not stand alone. The change that transformed Simon Bar-Jonas into St. Peter was a change that affected his fellow-disciples too. They had all failed in courage and loyalty. In the Garden of Gethsemane "they all forsook Him and fled." And yet we find them all, less than two months later, witnessing to Christ with open courage in the face of every kind of opposition. The story of the opening chapters of Acts is the greatest story of character transformation in the world. And it is not only the change from cowardice to courage. In every way the early Christians were men of a new type of character. St. Paul had never lacked courage. He hardly seems to have known the nature of fear. But he had gone through years of the intensest moral struggle, trying to do what was right. "The good which I would I do not," he said, "but the evil which I would not, that I practise." "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law

of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death ? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord " (Rom. 7 19, 22-24). The man with no peace in his mind, unable to conquer his own strong impulses and passions, has found victory and peace. And as we read the story of his astonishing missionary journeys, which were the very making of the early Church, we understand the secret of his power. Christ had simply transformed him. There was peace within.

But this same miracle is one which has happened again and again, and which still happens. We read of Augustine finding strength to conquer the physical temptation of moral impurity, of Bunyan brought into peace after years of struggle with obsessing fears and doubts. And there are not only these famous and startling cases of sudden conversion. There are the hundreds and thousands of ordinary folk who just find strength to do the daily task, to resist the daily temptation, and whose lives are gradually changed. Any parish priest will know of numbers of examples from his own experience. Perhaps the best modern book to use for illustration is Mr. Begbie's *Broken Earthenware*, which is full of life-stories of men who have known what it means to be " born again " in Christ.

And so we have a perfect right to believe that this can happen in our own lives. We have, each one of us, plenty of faults of character. But Christ has need of us and can use us, if we will let Him do so. And if we come to Him He can make us into the sort of men and women that He can use, as He used St. Peter, St. Paul, and the others in the first days of His Church.

L. W. G.

LESSON 49

"The Captain of Our Salvation"

3. Christ, the Redeemer and Eternal Life-Giver

[*For the teacher's reading and study*: This lesson is concerned with the essential message of Christianity, and, of course, cannot be made adequate or complete. The teacher should look up and keep in mind throughout the lesson the following passages: St. Mark 10 45; St. Matthew 26 28; St. John 6 35, 40, 51-59, 9 11, 17 2, 3.]

We have seen in the last two lessons how Christ can touch and change human life, both body and mind. We have now to come to the most fundamental question of all. It can be put in two ways. We can ask what it all means that Christ should have this power. That is to put the question from the scientific or philosophical end. Or we can ask how Christ's work affects our souls, which are the most real and important parts of us. That is to put the question from the point of view of our ultimate destiny. At first sight the two questions may not seem to be at all connected with one another, but we shall soon see that the answer to the one very quickly gives us the answer to the other also.

What does the Power of Christ Mean?—It is surely clear that this power of bringing strength and healing to bodies and minds which would normally be weak and ill is something life-giving or creative. The miracles of Christ do not contradict nature, any more than the transformation of the seed into the flower contradicts nature. They rather show a power of life within Nature that triumphs over sickness and mental weakness. And this is exactly what we should expect, since we believe that Christ is nothing less than the self-revelation of God, the Creator. That is what St. John means when he identifies Jesus with the "Word" of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life" (St. John 1 1-3). So, too, we speak of the Holy Spirit, Who is the mode of Christ's working in the world to-day, as the "Giver of life."

And thus the meaning of this power of Christ, of which we have been speaking in the last two lessons, is simply that God's creative love is still working in the world which He made. We may be bound by the past, fast in "the chain of our sins," or, in the language more fashionable to-day, limited by our environment and by heredity. But God's love is not bound. He still creates,

and His creation is not dead, but living. He can give, and does give, life. And because God is eternal, the life which He gives is eternal, too. For we cannot imagine that anything that is made and loved by God can perish.

The Barrier of Sin.—The great barrier to God's creative and life-giving love is sin. We can even see this upon the level of bodily and mental healing. There is no doubt at all that such passions as anger, jealousy, hate, fear, do actually affect the health of those who allow them to have free play. Doctors know this well enough, and, indeed, it is just what we should expect, since these things are a denial of love, and love is life. And so when sin appeared in the world God's work in creation was checked. We do not know exactly how sin came, but we can see that the very fact that God made man free made sin possible. Man has again and again used his freedom wrongly, but even so it is better that he should have been made free, for God wanted the love and service of free men, and not the automatic goodness of machines or slaves.

And so came the problem. How could God bring good out of evil, and destroy the effect of our sin in ourselves and in the world, without simply overriding our freedom? He could, of course, simply punish the sin; but that would not serve His purpose in creation. The destruction of sinners might in some sense be a vindication of justice, but it would nevertheless be the final failure of God's purpose in making man. Another and a better way had to be found.

The Redemptive Work of Christ.—That way was the Coming of Jesus of Nazareth, wholly God and wholly man. In Him we see the problem actually solved, and solved in a free human life. Steadfastly, all through His earthly ministry, Jesus refused to use His miraculous powers on His own behalf, even to save His life (St. Matthew 4 1-11, 26 53). What He accomplished was wrought within humanity and not upon it. It was no external act of God, but a creative work of life. And as man, Jesus conquered sin and broke through the prison bars of death. He was sinless, though tempted in all points even as we are tempted. And He rose from the dead.

But that was not all. He did not accomplish this work only for Himself. From His life there flowed out a power into human lives about Him. It was literally true that He bore their sins,

and that they found new life in Him. He bore their sins by the power of a love that entered into the very soul of the sinner and was one with it. And that meant suffering ; for it is the hardest thing in the world for holiness and love to bear the sin of him who is loved. The good mother whose child goes wilfully astray is perhaps the best example of such suffering in our ordinary human experience. But even the love of mother for child is not so close or so holy as that of God for every individual human soul.

And so we get some idea, though at the best it can only be faint and imperfect, of the meaning of the Cross. In Gethsemane and on the Hill of Calvary human wilfulness, blindness and cruelty did everything that was possible to them. And still, though denied, forsaken, scourged, mocked, crucified, Jesus held fast to that perfect love of man which sought the restoration and love of the sinner. " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Just because He was perfect creative love in human life, an outpouring of God in man, He must of necessity suffer. Love could do nothing else when faced by sin. He would not use force in any form, for that would have been something less than love. And so He bore sin itself, and the fruits of sin, the punishment which sin brings upon itself. Though He was sinless, He endured all the effects of sin, even to the bitter loneliness upon the Cross, when He cried, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? "

And the result was not death, but life. The Resurrection was the dawn of a new day of hope in the lives of men. He still touches our lives directly with a power of love which is both human and Divine. He still suffers when we sin because He loves us, and His love rises up as a power within our souls to set us free from the bondage of sin. Because He lives we can live also.

The Meaning of This for Us.—We can put this very shortly. The work of Jesus Christ has had two results.

1. *We can be Free from Sin.*—There is a stronger power in us than the power of heredity, or environment, or any temptation. The living, creative love of God can give us new lives for old, new characters for sin-stained ones. We can be sure that sins are forgiven if only we will repent. For the meaning of the word repentance is just turning towards God. And in the Cross we see God's response. He bears the cost of sin, and the sinner (as in the case of the penitent thief) finds hope and peace in Him.

2. *We can be Sure of Eternal Life.*—For this new life in us is

nothing else than the eternal creative life of God Himself. It is untouched by death. In the Resurrection of Christ we have the pledge and the beginning of that new life which has " dawned to all eternity."

L. W. G.

LESSON 50

Some who have Followed the Captain: 1. Archbishop William Laud (1573-1645)

[For the teacher's reading and study: Jude 3; I. St. Peter 3 15; Eph. 2 19, 20.]

William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, born 1573, beheaded 1645, is one of the most interesting characters in English Church history; for he saved the Church of England from Calvinism and confirmed her in apostolic doctrine and reverent and orderly services. Laud's work has been much misjudged, mainly on three counts: (1) Because he used the power of the State to enforce his reforms in the Church; but that was the ordinary procedure of his time; (2) Because in the struggle between the Divine Right of Kings and Parliamentary Government he identified himself (and therewith the Church) with the Stuarts; (3) Because he was suspected of Romanism. With the first two charges, deeply interesting and important as is the study of Laud's theory and practice of secular Government, we have not time to deal; to the charge of Romanism there are three answers: (a) The evidence of Sir John Evelyn in his famous *Diary*: " I was in Rome when the news of Laud's death arrived. There were great rejoicings at it. They spoke of his murder as that; of the greatest enemy the Church of Rome had in England "; (b) Laud's statement at his Trial: " I have converted many from Popery; I have taken an oath against it; I have written a book against it; I have been twice offered a Cardinal's hat and refused it "; (c) Our own judgment when we come later in this lesson to deal with his work in the Church.

The English Church in the Time of Laud.—Laud was the son of a clothier in Reading, and went to the local school, and his rise to supreme power in Church and State was due to his own capacity, and not to birth or influence. When he went up to Oxford, at the age of sixteen, the English Church had thrown over Papal Supremacy (under Henry VIII.), and the Pope had

retaliated in 1570 with his Bull of Excommunication against Elizabeth, thereby casting out the English Church from communion with Rome. The alliance, in the reigns of Elizabeth and Mary, between the Pope and Spain, England's most dreaded foe, had so identified the Roman Church with foreign aggression that opposition to the Papacy was now regarded by the English as a necessary safeguard of national independence. But though united against the Papacy, the English Church was deeply divided in matters of faith and worship. The great body of people, especially in the country, loved the old familiar services, and were devotedly served by many of the clergy, notably by George Herbert, the saintly country parson and poet.

(Tell the class about Little Gidding described in Shorthouse's novel, *John Inglesant*.) But Calvinism had taken deep root in parts of England, particularly in Oxford and Cambridge, which were the training-schools of the clergy. Laud had to contend against this crude and cruel theology, which conceived of a God who had predestinated more than half the human race to eternal punishment. Calvinism was an extreme example of the abuse of a good thing, namely the liberty of thought which resulted from the revival of learning and the invention of printing. The Calvinists and Puritans repudiated the Sacraments and Episcopacy and the Prayer Book services, and wherever they were in power they turned the churches into preaching conventicles. It was difficult to refute them, because there was immense ignorance about Church history and about the Catholic Church before Rome became corrupt, and scholars and theologians were needed to trace the continuity of the English Church of their day with the Apostolic Church, and to distinguish clearly between what was true and what was false in the teaching of the Roman Church. As so often happens, God raised up men to meet the need, and Laud was backed up in his efforts to restore the purity of Christian doctrine and worship by a remarkable group of men of great intellectual power, such as Richard Hooker, Francis Bacon, Bishop Cosin, and the saintly Bishops Andrewes and Jeremy Taylor. (It was an age of great men in sanctity, intellect, literature, and art. Crashaw, Milton, Sir Thomas Browne, Izaak Walton, Donne, Vaughan, Vandyke, Rubens, Inigo Jones, all belong to the seventeenth century.)

The following examples of Laud's reforms will give us some idea of the immense debt we in the Church to-day owe to him and his friends.

Reforms in Church Doctrine.—(1) Laud saved the Sacramental life of the Church, defending the doctrines of Baptismal Regeneration and of the efficacy of Holy Communion ; and he showed that the Episcopate was an abiding institution in the Catholic Church. (2) The Declaration of James I., prefixed to the 39 Articles in our Prayer Book, was due to Laud ; and by it he saved the Articles from a Calvinistic interpretation. Mr. Gladstone said of him that he was “ the man who prevented the English Church from being bound in the fetters of an iron system of compulsory and Calvinistic belief.”

Order and Reverence in Churches.—(1) In many churches the altar had been moved from the east end and placed in the body of the church. Here is a description of the ensuing irreverence with which Laud was faced. “ Churchwardens kept their accounts on it (i.e. the altar) ; parishioners despatched their parish business at it ; schoolmasters taught the boys to write at it ; boys laid their hats, satchels, and books upon it ; men sat and leant irreverently against it at sermon-time ; glaziers knocked it full of nail-holes.” Laud knew that if such irreverence were condoned, belief in the sacramental character of the Eucharist would be lost ; so he ordered the altars to be replaced at the east end and railed off, and pews in the chancel or in the body of the Church which obstructed the view to be pulled down. (2) The Puritan preachers had been using the churches for long sermons on Calvinistic doctrine, and had neglected the proper Church services ; so Laud ordered that the services in the churches were to be those of the Prayer Book, and instructed the clergy to catechise the people on the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments.

Other Reforms.—Bishops had been accustomed to live in London instead of in their dioceses, hanging around the Court in hope of preferment, and drawing large revenues from their sees. Laud ordered them, by Royal decree, to keep to their dioceses and do their work properly. He was no respecter of persons, and was very severe upon any kind of jobbery, especially among the well-to-do ; but he was consistently kind to the poor, whether the humbler clergy or lay folk. He restored the discipline of the Church over offenders against morals of high position, and the nobleman was compelled to do public penance for immorality side by side with the humblest villager. He was Chancellor of the Universities of Oxford and Dublin. He carried out great

reforms at Oxford, including the closing of 200 out of 300 ale-houses, and he was always a keen and generous patron of learning and art. The restoration of St. Paul's Cathedral under Inigo Jones was due to his energy and desire. He encouraged commerce, and purged some Government posts of corrupt practices. In character he appears to have been autocratic and managing ; but his diary reveals him as a humble and devout Christian at heart, and he showed great Christian fortitude and gentleness during his imprisonment and trial and at his death. He was beheaded in 1645 by the Puritan party as a Romaniser and as a traitor to Parliamentary Government. On the day of his death the use of the Prayer Book in churches was forbidden. Episcopacy had been abolished two years earlier, and it seemed as if all Laud's work was lost. But it triumphed finally ; for at the Restoration the people gladly returned to Church doctrine and Prayer Book services, and to-day we see how moderate and wise were his reforms.

V. H.

LESSON 51

Some who have followed the Captain

2. John Wesley, (1703-1791)

[*For the Teacher's Reading and Study*: St Matthew 28 18 to end ; Col. 1 9-14.

This lesson should be associated with Lessons 4, 6 and 13. It is most important that our young people should have quite clear ideas as to the origin and present position of the Wesleyans, and so be able to move wherever possible towards that re-union of Christians, which is certainly dear to the heart of our common Master. Nothing can be gained on the one hand by underestimating Wesley's great service to Christ or, on the other, by minimising his own and his followers' undoubted mistakes.

John Wesley (1703-1791) was one of the greatest forces of social regeneration in English history. It is worth quoting the verdict of two great historians on this point. J. R. Green says, "a religious revival (i.e. that due to Wesley's and Whitfield's preaching) burst forth which changed, after a time, the whole tone of English society. The Church was restored to life and activity. Religion carried to the hearts of the people a fresh spirit of moral zeal, while it purified our literature and manners. A new philanthropy reformed our prisons, infused clemency and wisdom into our penal laws, abolished the slave trade, and gave the first

impulse to popular education." And Lecky claimed that Wesley was one of the chief forces which saved England from a revolution such as France had (1789-1795). Wesley did not set out to be a social reformer, his aim was to fit men for Heaven, rather than to make this world fit for men; but he preached regeneration of the individual soul in Christ, and social regeneration followed.

It is a calamity that his great services, in reviving true religion in England, were at the cost of founding what is to-day one of the largest and most influential Christian bodies *outside* the Anglican Church. Wesley never intended to found a sect, his aim was to reform the Church, not to separate from it. But he had tremendous difficulties to contend against, and, to judge him fairly, we must know something of the religious and social conditions of England in his day.

Religious and Social Conditions in England in the eighteenth century.—"Everyone laughs" in England "if one talks of religion," was the comment of a distinguished French visitor, and it was true. The educated classes, including the bulk of the clergy, did not believe in Christianity. The great Bishop Butler wrote *The Analogy* to combat the current belief that the Christian Faith was an exploded theory, in which no thinking person could believe. The industrial classes were left untaught, and often without religious ministrations of any kind. "At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the Established Church hardly counted in the spiritual life of the districts where mines and factories began to collect these vast populations. In most of the places . . . the Church scarcely existed for the poor except as the most unrelenting of the forces of law and order" (Hammond). Thackeray in *The Four Georges* gives a terrible description of the worldliness of the clergy. The services were formal or irreverent, sermons taught the virtue of respectability but little more, so the Archbishop of Canterbury, writing in 1760, lamented that the Church by failing "to preach the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, had given to Methodists an opportunity to decry us, and to gain followers." As a natural result of the decay in religious faith, immorality and a low standard of living prevailed amongst all classes. Immorality, drunkenness, swearing, were common vices in all ranks and both sexes. "I could not make out who she was," said a servant, reporting a visit from the Duchess of Marlborough, "but she swore so dreadfully I knew she must be a lady of quality." Housing conditions and conditions of labour were terribly bad, children of six years worked

fourteen hours a day in factory or mine, and received no education ; adults and children were hanged for trifling offences ; the people were brutal and degraded ; prisons were death-traps of disease and moral corruption.

Into this degraded state of society came, as a great, strong, purifying fire, John Wesley, with his vivid, practical faith and his burning zeal for souls.

Wesley's Upbringing and Way of Life.—Wesley was the son of a zealous clergyman, and a devout mother. He had a stern religious upbringing, and all his life he lived by rule, rising at 4 or 5 a.m., and using every moment to advantage. When he began to travel 50 or 60 miles a day on horseback, on his preaching tours, he trained himself to read as he rode. For he was naturally a scholar, and Oxford, with its intellectual interests, held great attractions for him ; but the whole bent of his disciplined will and of his ordered life was to one end—to win souls for Christ.

At Oxford he and his younger brother, Charles Wesley, to whom we owe many beautiful hymns, and George Whitfield, the great field preacher and Wesley's colleague, and a few other undergraduates, lived strictly by rule of prayer, fasting, Bible study, and frequent communions, and devoted themselves to the care of prisoners and the sick and poor, earning for themselves many mocking names, one of which—the Methodists—has stuck to this day.

The Religious Revival and the Growth of Methodism.—It was Whitfield who was the pioneer of the religious revival among the poor. He found a large mining district near Bristol without a church, and began to preach in the fields, and soon attracted audiences of ten to twenty-thousand, "many of them colliers with whom few dared to mingle," but Whitfield moved them to tears, which made "white channels down their blackened cheeks." Wesley soon joined Whitfield, and against all his sense of decency and order, for he had thought "the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church," he also became a field preacher. That was the beginning of the Wesleyan movement. The religion of Wesley and Whitfield was too real, too unconventional (at its early stages their preaching was often attended by highly emotional experiences on the part of converts), for the Anglican Church with its dread of enthusiasm ; they were literally forced to preach outside, not only because there were no churches provided for those they wanted to reach, but also because Anglican pulpits were closed to them. Soon Whitfield and

Wesley could not minister to the crowds up and down England that waited to be taught, the Anglican clergy would not help, and so a second step towards Wesleyanism was taken when Wesley started lay preachers. Next they needed places to meet in, and meeting-houses were built. But Wesley never wanted to separate from the Church; he wanted Methodism to be a guild within the Church; he always insisted that his people were members of the Church, but that they wanted more informal and devotional services, more oversight in their lives. For Wesley's was an intensely practical religion; he aimed at Christian perfection; to join his society meant to live a reformed life; Cornish wreckers, for example, had to abandon their cruel practice, trade in "uncustomed" (smuggled) goods was forbidden, as much as drunkenness or loose living. It was a strenuous religion, and where he could, Wesley began the services and preaching on Sunday at four or five in the morning, expecting a congregation.

The Reaction on the Church and on Social Conditions.—Thus, up and down the country, Wesley rode and preached, claiming the world as his parish. And thus a great religious revival spread through England. It reacted on the apathy and indifference of the Church, quickening the spiritual and moral forces which issued in the Evangelical Revival within the Church, and which, in its turn, with its devotion to the cause of social reform, abolished slavery, reformed our prisoners and penal laws, and got rid of the worst abuses of the industrial system.

Causes of Wesley's Secession.—Wesley remained to the end a churchman in desire and almost entirely in doctrine; but his separation in fact from the Church was due mainly to two causes: (1) the apathy and hostility of the Church; (2) his own autocratic temper. Moreover, he inherited a strong strain of Nonconformity, for several of his forbears had suffered persecution for their Nonconformist opinions.

But in the cause of re-union we should remind ourselves and our Wesleyan brethren, that if Wesley had lived to-day, room would have been found for him and his reforms.

For over half a century Wesley kept a journal, which should be studied to gain an insight into the strength and beauty of his character and the greatness of his work.

LESSON 52

Some who have Followed the Captain.

3. Lady Julian of Norwich

[For the teacher's reading and study : 1 Cor. 12 and 13. To be learnt by heart, 1 St. John 4 10, 11.]

The Lady Julian, by R. H. Thouless, Ph.D. (S.P.C.K. 4/6), in a simple and interesting account gives further information about the anchoress, in whom all members of the English Church should find interest, as she is one of the greatest mystics of our country.]

Julian of Norwich, or Lady or Mother Julian, as she is often called, is one of the most attractive and lovable of all our English saints. Like St. Francis of Assisi she was filled with a joyous love of God and of her fellow creatures, and like him also she devoted her life entirely to God. But whereas we know a good deal about the life of St. Francis and there are several biographies of him, we know almost nothing of Julian's life and family. Therefore when people say they love her, and, like St. Francis again, she is loved by many, their knowledge of her is gained from her great book, *The Revelations of Divine Love*; for all through the pages of that book, though she herself is only thinking of recording the wonderful message God gave her, there shines her own gracious, loving personality. All we know of Julian's early life is that she was probably educated at the Convent of Carrow, a nunnery not far from Norwich, founded by King Stephen, and which was a sort of boarding-school for the daughters of the chief families of Norfolk, where they were taught reading, writing, Latin, French, fine needlework, and where they would also be very carefully grounded in the Christian Faith.

Julian was born about 1342, and was therefore a contemporary of Chaucer and Wyclif.

The Life of an anchoress.—In those days it was a fairly common practice for women to become anchoresses: that is to live a solitary life, devoted to prayer. To many churches in villages and towns there was attached a wooden or stone cell, or little house of two or three rooms in which dwelt the anchoress with a servant to do her errands and to protect her. The anchoress's room generally had three windows: one into the church, so that she could take part in the services, one into the room of her servant, and one on an outside wall, curtained across except when someone came to it to ask for her help and advice. Through this latter means, although cut off from the world, she knew far more than most people concerning what was going on in it

Julian the anchoress.—It was in such a little house built against the Church of St. Julian in Conisford, a furlong distant from her Convent at St. Carrow, that, according to a history of Norfolk, "in 1393 Lady Julian was a strict recluse." "This woman," adds the historian, "was in these days esteemed one of greatest holiness." The remains of the foundations of Julian's house are still to be seen. How and when the call came to her to give up the ordinary, happy, social life that might have been hers we do not know; but probably for some forty years Julian lived in her cell without once quitting it.

The Meaning of Vocation.—The question we want answered is how could anyone serve God or her neighbours who cut herself off so entirely from everybody and from active service on their behalf? And as to-day there are still communities of men and women living such lives of prayer we shall be better able to understand their way of serving God if we find the key to Mother Julian's life.

The way of approach is first to consider what we mean by Vocation. Vocation means called of God, called to do a particular piece of work for God. St. Paul teaches this very clearly in I. Corinthians 12. In the physical body all the different members are necessary and useful. It is the differentiation of parts, each giving a different kind of service that is so essential. St. Paul uses the physical body and the work it does as an illustration of the working of the spiritual body, the Church. Each one of us has his or her special work or vocation in life, and we must believe this although we may not always like other people's vocations or see the use of them. A great artist one day whilst busily painting, suddenly felt conscience-stricken about her house-keeper spending her days cooking and cleaning for her whilst she gave her whole time to the work of painting, which she so greatly loved. Soon her housekeeper came into the room, and after gazing at her for a moment, exclaimed, "Eh, Miss Janet, I wouldn't like your life, tied to your painting all day; I'd be bored to death!" Each was happy in her own work, but neither saw the attraction of the other's. Mother Julian's vocation, her life-long calling, was that of prayer: prayer which taught her a great deal about God and His dealings with us, and intercessory prayer for all her fellow-creatures.

Julian's Life a Life of Great Service.—(a) *The Power of Prayer.* Sometimes people say, "I am afraid I can only pray for you," as if that were the least help they could give; but real prayer

is the greatest force in the world for helping people. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. . . . For so the whole round earth is every way, Bound by gold chains about the Feet of God." Julian lived in distressful times ; some of the worst years of the Hundred Years' War ; the Black Death, which swept away half the population of England and was particularly virulent in Norwich ; the Peasants' Revolt, the outcome of deep misery and oppression ; all happened during Julian's lifetime. Instead of turning away her eyes from the sorrows of the world she sought to find the real cure by turning to God and asking first for a deeper sorrow for sin, her own and the world's, and a better understanding of how God deals with it through Jesus Christ ; and secondly for a great compassion for her fellow-creatures, which found expression in continual prayer for them.

(b) *A life of Prayer an example to us.* A life given up to prayer, as Julian's was, serves as a great reminder to us of our own need of making time for prayer, and of its wonderful power to help both ourselves and others.

(c) *God's Messenger.* God sometimes calls one of His children apart and teaches him something about Himself that He wants all His children to know. He calls him apart so that he may have silence in his life and heart to hear His voice. So He did with the great prophets of the Old Testament, and with St. John Baptist in the wilderness, and St. John in Patmos. This is what He did with Julian ; He called her apart and taught her wonderful things about the Love of God ; and she knew quite well that the message was given her not for her own sake but to pass it on to her fellow-Christians. "Because of the shewing" (vision), she says, "I am not good but if I love God the better, and inasmuch as ye love God the better it (the showing) is more to you than to me. . . . For truly it was not shewed me that God loved me better than the least soul that is in grace ; for I am certain that there be many that never had shewing nor sight but of the common teaching of Holy Church that love God better than I. . . . It is God's will that ye take it with great joy and pleasance, as if Jesus had shewed it to you all."

God is Love. Someday some of you may want to read for yourselves Julian's book which is full of inspiration and wise help for us even to-day, five hundred years later. All there is time now to say about her teaching is that, like St. John the Evangelist, her constant theme is the Love of God. When she

was thirty years old she had sixteen revelations or visions in the space of a few days, and during the fifteen to twenty following years, God helped her to understand these visions more clearly. Often during those years she asked what was our Lord's meaning in giving her these visions and at last the answer came. "Wouldst thou learn thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well: Love was His meaning. Who shewed it thee? Love. What shewed He thee? Love. Wherefore shewed it He? For Love." And Julian adds, "Thus was I learned that Love was our Lord's meaning. And I saw full surely that ere God made us He loved us; which love was never slacked, nor ever shall be."

V. H.

LESSON 53

Christianity in the Jungle.

Maps of Borneo and Sarawak are required; also *Pictures of Dyaks*, jungle, jungle houses, schools and churches. The *Borneo Mission Chronicle*, published quarterly contains the most useful map for reference to Mission Stations, which map might well be copied by the scholars, and places inserted as the lesson proceeds. The *Handbook on Borneo* (S.P.G. 9d.), *The Sea-Dyaks of Borneo* (S.P.G. 1s. 6d.) and *Children of Borneo* (Oliphant, 2s. 6d.) both the latter by the Rev. E. H. Gomes—may be consulted for further information.]

Borneo, one of the largest islands in the world and one of the most interesting, lies across the equator, in the group of islands known as the Malay Archipelago. Much can be deduced from the geographical position of the island; being on the equator, it knows no seasons, but summer holds sway all the year round. The country is under various rulers; the part that is to be considered now, Sarawak, being under the rule of an English Rajah, Mr. Charles Vyner Brooke, known as the Rajah Vyner. The inhabitants of the dense jungle, which covers the greater part of the state, are the Dyaks, the aborigines of the country. There are two distinct races of Dyaks, differing in features, customs and language, but as they are similar in character and receptivity of spiritual truth we shall consider them as one for the purpose of this lesson.

These Dyaks are a very interesting race of people. Years ago people in England thought they were fierce and blood-thirsty

because they heard strange, gruesome tales of the Head-hunters of Borneo. As a matter of fact the Dyaks did not go about the country cutting off people's heads for the fun of it. In time of war, a Dyak was entitled to the head of his enemy as a war trophy, and few young women would have married a Dyak youth who could not show at least one head in evidence of his bravery. The white man's rule combined with Christianity has changed even this.

Physically, the Dyak is a very fine man. Darker skinned and shorter than the average European, his lithe, sinewy body is admirably suited to the life he has to live. In character he is equally splendid : very sociable and hospitable, he makes a good companion, being truthful, honest and trustworthy. When the first English missionaries went to Sarawak they realised that there was a great opportunity to win the Dyaks for Christ.

The Religion of the Dyaks is a very poor thing and has little hold on them. It is a form of Animism (see Lesson 33), that is, they believe that gods and spirits inhabit all their surroundings. Certain ceremonies, sacrifices, omens and incantations are observed ; but the Dyaks are very hazy about their meaning or value. To hear certain birds in certain positions is regarded as omens which must be attended to according to custom or disaster follows. Their chief sacrifices are the killing of fowls or pigs, and offering of food. This latter the gods are supposed to eat, and, even when the Dyak can see the food is there, he is not perturbed, for he says that is only the husk, its real essence having been eaten by the god. There is no likeness between the Dyak idea of sacrifice and the Christian idea. The Dyak merely hopes to obtain success in his undertakings, or more skill ; or if he has done wrong " to make it up " with the offended deity.

Their belief in a spiritual life is definite but in no way spiritual. It will be merely a repetition of this life, and may recur as many as seven times before the individual disappears into nothingness. There are no priests or temples, and the Dyaks know nothing of prayer. Once a Dyak Christian said he would like to go as teacher to his own people and when asked what he would teach them, answered, " I would teach them to pray."

Bishop McDougall and Bishop Chambers. The first English Missionary to Sarawak was the Reverend Francis Thomas McDougall who afterwards became Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak. He could not do much work among the Dyaks as he was needed in Kuching, the capital of Sarawak. So one by one other young

men went and were sent to places in the jungle where the Dyaks wanted to learn about Christianity.

In 1858 the first Mission Station, other than at places easily served from Kuching among the Dyaks, was established at Banting, several days' journey by boat from the capital. Mr. Chambers, who became Bishop when Bishop McDougall left, was in charge, and how great were his work and influence is shown by the following account: "One Dyak, staying for a time in Banting, came for instruction and was baptised. He became head of his village far inland and for ten years, entirely alone, he taught his people, gathering them together regularly for prayer in the Church which they built. Another, the son of a pirate, was also taught and baptised: some months afterwards he brought his wife and daughter for instruction, and when, four years later, Mr. Chambers visited his tribe, he found, after thorough examination, that no fewer than one hundred and eighty of them had been so carefully taught that he had no hesitation in baptising them at once. At the time of his consecration there were about one thousand Dyaks and two hundred Chinese Christians; and four churches and three chapels had been built." The Dyaks were very keen to learn and to build their own places of worship. Here is the story of a missionary who asked for a house to live in. He found out its cost and sent the money to the chief. The chief had the whole tribe summoned by the banging of huge gongs. A council was held, and comparison drawn between their former and present state. One of the principal men jumped up, and with much excitement threw on the ground sheets of paper containing the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and the Commandments, saying, "This is more worth to us than any wages. Has anyone hitherto come to teach us the truths which now for the first time we are taught by him? Did not our former masters come only to plunder and to tyrannise over us? Rather than look for payment we ought to be thankful he comes to us at all, and to remember that the wish to have a house here is itself a proof of his affection for us." The Dyaks had no written language so the missionaries had to learn by sound and then write the Dyak words in Roman letters. Now there are Prayer Books and hymn books in Dyak, and parts of the Bible too.

The greatest difficulty which confronted the early missionary was the power which the "manang," or witch-doctor, had, with his charms and incantations. He claimed to be able to cure all illnesses, and, whether he were successful or not, he was always

well paid. Many of the staunchest Christians are some of these "manangs" who have destroyed their charms and repudiated their old practices and pretences.

Present-day Work.—Very much hopeful and encouraging work is being done among the Dyaks. Some of them have for long been teachers and catechists among their own people, and have made good missionaries. The year 1924 was an historical one for them, for on the Feast of the Epiphany the first Dyak to be raised to the Priesthood was ordained in St. Thomas' Cathedral, Kuching, and another was ordained Deacon, and both are now working among their own people. This is the beginning of a native ministry among the Dyaks.

The Future.—An examination of the map of Sarawak, and comparison of its area with that of England, will show how wide a district must be allotted to each of the three or four priests who work there. This entails a good deal of travelling; and travelling by jungle-path and stream is slow work; often whole days are spent in going from one village to the next. Very little time can be given to teaching compared with the time spent in travelling, and some places can only be reached perhaps once in a year. Many more missionaries are needed, so that each can have a smaller district. It is very sad when the Dyak men and women are begging to be taught, that so often they have to be told to wait. In Sarawak is a field very white to harvest, and the labourers are very few.

MISS GWENDOLINE A. SEBBORN, L.L.A., (*Kuching*)
of the staff of the Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak.

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